The Subcontinent Divided: A New Beginning

Edited by IAN TALBOT

The Independence of India and Pakistan

New Approaches and Reflections

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About the Editor

Ian Talbot is Director of the Centre for Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies at the University of Southampton. His recent publications include *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947–2002* (ed. 2007), *Divided Cities: Partition and its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957* (2006), and *The Partition of India* (with Gurharpal Singh, 2009).

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1

Introduction

Over six decades have now passed since the British left the subcontinent, and India and Pakistan embarked on their journeys as independent states. The circumstances surrounding the partition of the subcontinent continues to dominate political and historical debate, despite the numerous changes which have occurred in the life of the two nations in the intervening decades. Much of the ground is well-trodden, although still hotly contested with respect to the timing of the British departure, the 'blame' for the large-scale massacres and migrations which scarred independence and the legacies in terms of Indo-Pakistan relations which result from this traumatic period. Recent works by such authors as Stanley Wolpert and Andrew Roberts have restated these old debates for a new generation.[1] The respective roles of the chief protagonists, Mountbatten, Jinnah, Nehru and Gandhi[2] have been dissected, rehearsed and revised often in a controversial fashion as exemplified by Ayesha Jalal's now classic work, *The Sole Spokesman.*[3] Yet there are still gaps in both the historical knowledge and understanding of this period, when attention is turned away from these well trodden paths.

The aim of this collection is to bring fresh insights and material to the subject of the independence of India and Pakistan. In part the volume follows the 'new history' approach which has dominated writing on the partition in the past decade. The emphasis in this discourse is on developments at the local, rather than the national, level and on the consequences of the partition for ordinary people, rather than on its political causes. This approach was pioneered by Indian feminist writers and has produced such influential studies as *Borders and Boundaries* and *The Other Side of Silence*.[4] It has found

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an echo with respect to the Pakistan experience in the work of Nighat Said Khan.[5] As well as feminism and subaltern studies, the other major intellectual influences were deconstructionist methodologies of postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism that sought to place the subject at the centre of their research. However, the literature on Pakistan is sparse with respect to that of India, in part because reflection on the human suffering of independence sits more easily with an Indian nationalist discourse of partition as 'loss', while Pakistan's historiography focuses on the achievement of freedom and in particular on the role of Jinnah and the Muslim League in bringing this about. Partition is eschewed as a term by most Pakistani writers as it is viewed as a politically loaded concept with its connotations of 'loss' and of Pakistan as a *seceding* power from an Indian state that had inherited sovereignty from British India. In this volume it is used as a politically neutral term which is especially linked with writings which seek to uncover the human dimensions of independence.

With respect to the 'new history' and the Indian experience, much has recently been written about refugee migrations and resettlement and on the highly differentiated patterns of violence.[6] A series of local level studies have been produced which draw on a range of new documentary sources as well as oral testimonies.[7] Individual accounts provide a useful source for interrogating official histories of refugee rehabilitation.[8] They need however to be treated with care, not just because of the problem of faulty recall, but because they can be heavily influenced by national and community histories. Though the 'new history' has been able to transcend some of the old disputes by bringing out differentiated experiences across class, gender, and regional divides, it is also prone to the familiar distortions, stereotypes and biases of conventional historical accounts.

Traditionally the Punjab has dominated the historiography of Indian independence beginning with official histories of partition and reflecting the movement in the 1970s from a concern with the All-India level to the province. This reflects the intensity of the struggle in the region and its centrality to the creation of Pakistan. The concentration of the violence and the mass migrations in the region has also placed its study at the forefront of the 'new history'.

Indeed, the iconic images of partition-related migration are all drawn from this region, whether it is the vast refugee foot columns trudging alongside bullock carts to a new homeland, or the crowded refugee trains. There is however an increasing realization that there were significant regional variations in the patterns of violence and migration. The work of Joya Chatterji has reinforced earlier studies to reveal how different, for example, was the timing of partition-related migration in Bengal as opposed to Punjab.[9] She has also gone beyond the existing literature's preoccupation with the resettlement of upper-caste Hindus to reveal the internal displacement faced by many Muslims in West Bengal.[10] Migration experiences have traditionally been confined in the literature to the focus on a single journey across the new international boundaries drawn by the Radcliffe Commission. Papiya Ghosh has revealed however the multiple displacements facing Bihari Muslims as they migrated from Bihar to West Bengal, thence to East Bengal and thence to Pakistan. To date some Biharis are still 'stateless' following the 1971 emergence of Bangladesh.[11]

Another emerging insight is that even within the Punjab region itself, there was no homogenous refugee experience. Evidence has been revealed in the works of Talbot and Kaur of the different patterns of 'anticipatory' and 'acute' refugee flight. Rich Hindus and Sikhs were moving their properties, families and possessions from 'Pakistan' areas well in advance of independence. It was their poorer counterparts who had to risk travel in extreme circumstances across the killing fields of the Punjab. On arrival in a new homeland, the refugees' ability to recover from the upheaval of forced migration depended to a large extent on the connections, skills and wealth which they brought with them. The two states also differentiated in terms of the provisions they made for different classes of refugee. Widows were housed in strictly segregated camps. The state acted in *loco parentis* for orphaned girls, even providing dowries for their marriage. Untouchables also had separate and largely inferior accommodation. The result was the upholding of traditional community and patriarchal hierarchies at a time of immense social dislocation. It was not only individuals who experienced contrasting fortunes in the aftermath of partition. Cities like Lyallpur and

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Ludhiana moved forward economically after the initial dislocation, Amritsar stagnated because of its border position. In some cities refugee labour and capital was vital to post-independence growth, in others such as for example Sialkot local residents took more advantage of the opportunities arising from the departure of the non-Muslim capitalist class.[12]

The large number of interviews conducted with refugees and their descendants has revealed dissonances between them and official accounts of rehabilitation. The latter emphasize the role of the state in the transformation of helpless refugees into productive citizens. First hand accounts, on the other hand, frequently write the state out of the rehabilitation process.[13] The omission of details of state assistance could be the result of faulty recall, but it is more likely created by a desire not to tarnish notions of self-reliance and to uphold family pride, as well as to reveal embarrassing details of bribery and use of influence to acquire property. The oral record has been dominated by accounts from middle class and above backgrounds. It is precisely these groups who were most prone to internalize stereotypes of Punjabi self-sufficiency and to remain silent about successes and failures in using 'influence' to smooth the path of resettlement.

A concern with the violence which precipitated the mass migrations of over nine million Punjabis alone is another feature of the 'new history'. We have already referred to the interest in women's experience of abduction and rehabilitation. Another aspect is the countering of the traditional understanding that violence was spontaneous and should be regarded as aberrational and inexplicable.[14] A number of studies have pointed to the organization of attacks on refugee trains[15] and the fact that political motives which included a desire to 'ethnically cleanse' minority populations motivated violence as much as religious passions. There has also been an interest in the way in which accounts of violence have been utilized both to stereotype the 'other' and to affirm community values and identity through notions of 'heroism' including the self-sacrifice of women to avoid molestation.[16] Violence has also been linked with the 'transitional' nature of the state in 1947 which created the circumstances in which police and bureaucrats could behave in a

partisan manner with impunity.[17] Butalia, Menon and Bhasin have all demonstrated that women were the victims both of 'other' male predators and of their own menfolk who killed them in order to save family and community 'honour'.[18]

Another major contribution of the 'new history' is to view independence and partition as a process rather than an event confined to August 1947. Refugee rehabilitation has been revealed as a decade long development for many individuals and communities in the Punjab.[19] The process was even more protracted in West Bengal where refugees were still eking out a camp existence a decade after independence. The creation of long term tensions between migrants and locals in Karachi has been laid bare by Sarah Ansari.[20] The insecurities of Muslims who did not migrate from UP and Delhi have been explored by Mushirul Hasan and Vazira Zamindar.[21] The theme of the 'long partition' could also of course be explored in terms of state relations[22] and patterns of political mobilization. With respect to the latter, Christophe Jaffrelot, for example, has pointed out the establishment of a vote-bank for Hindu nationalist candidates amongst Punjabi refugee residents of Delhi.[23] In Calcutta, the Communist Party of India gained support from refugees from East Bengal.[24]

There have been a number of fresh additions to the 'high politics' of Independence and the division of the subcontinent, since the revisionist works of the 1980s. Lucy Chester has recently provided the first major account of the Radcliffe Boundary Commission's deliberations with respect to the Punjab. This brings out the chaos which lay behind the proceedings, the extreme politicization of what was intended to be a judicial award, and the extent to which the Commission represented an attempt by the British to provide a fig-leaf of order for an increasingly out of control decolonization process.[25] A recent return to an older style narrative history of high politics with considerable success is provided by Yasmin Khan's work.[26] It brings out well the gulf between the political elite and the ordinary people with, for example, the understanding of the significance of the 3 June Plan. Recent studies in India and Pakistan have tended to reinforce well established views relating to the significance, for example, of Jinnah's leadership, and from the Indian

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perspective, the regrettable character of partition.[27] The thesis that the Congress, for example, was reluctantly forced to accept the division of the country in 1947 because of the Muslim League's stubbornness was restated as recently as 2000 by Sucheta Mahajan.[28]

This volume addresses a number of the themes in both the 'new history' and high politics accounts of the independence of India and Pakistan. It commences with the reprinting of Paul Brass's seminal 2003 article on violence in which he introduced a new conceptualization of 'retributive genocide' to the Punjab massacres. The piece thus not only called for a widening of the previously state-centric approach to genocide, but provided a way for the inclusion of the Punjab case in the wider literature on ethno-nationalist violence.[29] Traditional understanding had been to portray it as a unique case which defied comparative study, and indeed, rationalization.[30] This view has been questioned in a number of Talbot's publications, including his earlier edited collection with Oxford University Press, *The Deadly Embrace*.[31] The chapters in this volume build on this to uncover the organized and politicized character of the violence which simultaneously contained elements of opportunism for loot and women, and a desire for revenge. Indeed, it is becoming clear that the combination of privatized and politicized violence in an environment of state collapse or acquiescence is the defining feature of the extensive partition-related killings. The chapters reveal a number of fresh sources, most notably Police First Information Reports, that can shed new light on the patterns of violence and its perpetrators. An in-depth understanding can enable accounts to move beyond 'blame displacement' to reveal complex patterns of violence in the context of the transition to independence and its immediate aftermath. Religion provides legitimization but is revealed not to lie at the heart of acts of violence. Rather than being a throwback to medieval barbarity, the Punjab violence had much to do with politics and modernity. While Talbot provides a detailed account of the major atrocity which occurred in Sheikhupura but which has been little researched, Singh, in a reflective analysis, questions easy assumptions about the role of Sikh violence in East Punjab. In particular, he interrogates Ian Copland's recent reinstatement of the idea that most of these killings stemmed

from a Sikh conspiracy involving the Princes to ethnically cleanse the Muslims from the region.

The second section of the volume turns to themes surrounding the politics of partition and independence. It considers whether partition was an inevitable accompaniment of the transfer of power by the time of the final viceroyalty. In other words, was the Mountbatten Viceroyalty a change of style rather than substance? Linked with this is the question whether Mountbatten's charm offensive was crucial to securing British interests at the time of the transfer of power and whether this depended merely on his personality or on the earlier relationship he had established with Nehru? The contributions by Schofield and Talbot shed light on these questions and provide a wider examination of the climacteric of British rule than emerges from standard accounts of the last viceroyalty. One of the traditional criticisms attached to it concerns the inadequate responses to communal violence which resulted in the mass migrations and massacres of 1947. Nick Lloyd provides a timely assessment of the last year of British rule in the Punjab, the region at the epicentre of the violence. Surprisingly little has been written about the Governor Sir Evan Jenkins, although his talents were widely recognized by his contemporaries. His fortnightly reports to London possess a Cassandra type element which belies nationalist criticisms that he was unconcerned about the deteriorating situation on his watch. Nick Lloyd begins to address the question as to why his dire warnings were apparently disregarded in both New Delhi and London. His article thus not only brings into focus an important but under-researched personality, but sheds light on the workings of the Raj's machinery of government in its final days.

The British expectation was that partition would not only break the deadlock and thereby enable a swift transfer of power, but that it would pave the way for future good relations between India and Pakistan on such key issues as defence. These expectations foundered because of the bitterness engendered by disputes over the division of assets, the disturbances in the Punjab, and most importantly, the outbreak of hostilities because of the emergence of the Kashmir dispute. Widmalm, does not go over old ground with respect to its genesis, but seeks to reveal the longer term consequences for

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nationalism of the emergence of an 'enduring rivalry' between India and Pakistan which is symbolically centred on the Kashmir region.

The final section addresses a number of what may be termed 'new history' themes. Since Urvashi Butalia's pioneering study, the impact of partition on subaltern groups has formed a major research focus. Work has been done on the partition experience of women, children, and the Untouchable community. Surprisingly little has been written about the Christian community. Paul Griffin thus provides a pioneering study of the impact of partition on the West Punjab Christians. He utilizes missionary archive material to uncover the socio-economic dislocation for example experienced by Christian tenants of Hindu and Sikh landowners who left for India. Parallels can be discerned here with Joya Chatterji's work on West Bengal Muslims.[32] In both instances, communities did not cross international boundaries but they were internally displaced by the socio-economic changes arising from partition.

A number of 'new history' approaches to partition have focused on refugee resettlement in Delhi. The city in fact received the largest number of migrants from West Punjab anywhere outside of the Indian Punjab. Despite the departure of around 300,000 Muslims, Delhi's population grew by 1.1 million in the period 1941–1951. Ravinder Kaur has brought out the differentiated and prolonged settlement experiences of West Punjab migrants in the city.[33] V.N. Datta and Dipankar Gupta have revealed how the Punjabi influx demographically transformed Delhi.[34] They have also touched on the cultural transformation brought by the 'Punjabi Diaspora'. This topic is approached in a novel way in the final contribution to the volume. Food and rituals around eating have increasingly been recognized by historians as being heavily politicized as well as highly significant in maintaining identity. Ritu Bhagat, in another pioneering study, looks at the ways in which Punjabi migrants to Delhi sought to sustain their identity through the creation of a local food economy informed by their dietary preferences. Her chapter sheds light both on processes of social history and cultural representation in post-independence Delhi.

The collection seeks to balance established and younger scholars' work and to transcend narrow nationalist approaches. New sources

and angles of historical research are approached by all the contributors. A number of the contributions were initially aired in two academic events at the University of Southampton. The first, a major international conference on the 60th anniversary of independence was held in July 2007. This was followed in April 2010 by a small focused workshop which looked specifically at the themes of the violence in 1947 from new comparative and source based perspectives. Copyright for Chapter 2, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab 1946–47; Means, Methods and Purposes', rests with the author.

Notes

1. Stanley Wolpert, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1994).
2. On Mountbatten, see Philip Zeigler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* (London: Collins, 1985); For a recent reassessment of Jinnah, see Sikandar Hayat, *The Charismatic Leader: Quaid-i-Azam M.A. Jinnah and the Creation of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008). On Nehru, see Judith M. Brown, *Nehru: A Political Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and also see her earlier work on Gandhi, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
3. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
4. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998).
5. Nighat Said Khan, 'Identity, Violence and Women: A Reflection on the Partition of India, 1947', in Nighat Said Khan et al., *Locating the Self: Perceptions on Women and Multiple Identities* (Lahore: ASR Publications, 1994), pp. 157–71.
6. See I. Talbot and G. Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
7. See I. Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives Among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).
8. See U. Bhaskar Rao, *The Story of Rehabilitation* (New Delhi: Publications Divisions, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1967).
9. Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); see also Chapters 4 and 5 of Talbot and Singh,

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The Partition of India; Prafulla Chakrabarti, *The Marginal Men: The Refugees and the Left Political Syndrome in West Bengal* (Kalyani: Lumiere Books, 1990).

10. See Joya Chatterji, 'Of Graveyards and Ghettos. Muslims in Partitioned West Bengal, 1947–1967', in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy (eds.), *Living Together Separately: Cultural India in History and Politics* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 222–50.
11. On the Bihari Muslims' experience see Papiya Ghosh, *'Partition and the South Asian Diaspora: Extending the Subcontinent* (London: Routledge, 2007); Papiya Ghosh, 'Partition's Biharis', in Mushirul Hasan (ed.) *Islam, Communities and the Nation: Muslim Identities in South Asia and Beyond* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988), pp. 229–64.
12. See Ilyas Chattha, *Partition and Locality: Violence, Migration and Development in Gujranwala and Sialkot 1947–1961* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011).
13. See I. Talbot, 'Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances', *Modern Asian Studies* 45/1 (Jan. 2011), pp. 109–30.
14. See Chapter 3 of Talbot and Singh, *The Partition of India*.
15. Swarna Aiyar, 'August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947', in D.H. Low and Howard Brasted (eds.), *Freedom, Trauma, Continuities: Northern India and Independence* (New Delhi: Sage, 1998), pp. 15–39.
16. See Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
17. I. Talbot, 'The 1947 Partition Violence', in I. Talbot (ed.), *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947–2002* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1–16.
18. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, (New Delhi: Viking Penguin, 1998); Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*, (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998).
19. See Ian Talbot and Darshan Singh Tatla (eds.), *Epicentre of Violence: Partition Voices and Memories from Amritsar* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006).
20. Sarah Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh 1947–1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005).
21. Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India's Muslims since Independence* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997); Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
22. See Chapter 6, Talbot and Singh, *The Partition of India*.
23. C. Jaffrelot, 'The Hindu Nationalist Movement in Delhi: From "Locals" to Refugees—and towards Peripheral Groups?', in V. Dupont, E. Tarlo and D. Vidal (eds.), *Delhi: Urban Space and Human Destinies* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), pp. 181–203.
24. Prafulla K. Chakrabarti, *The Marginal Men* (Kalyani: Lumiere Books, 1990).
25. Lucy P. Chester, *Borders and Conflict in South Asia: The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of the Punjab* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).
26. Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

27. On Jinnah, see Akbar S. Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (London: Routledge, 1997).
28. Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India* (New Delhi: Sage, 2000).
29. See I. Talbot, 'The Partition of India', in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 420–38.
30. For this view, see J. Alam and S. Sharma, 'Remembering Partition', *Seminar* 461 (Jan. 1998), pp. 71–4.
31. Ian Talbot, *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan, 1947–2002* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007).
32. Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007); 'Of Graveyards and Ghettos: Muslims in Partitioned West Bengal, 1947-1967', in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy (eds), *Living Together Separately: Cultural India in History and Politics*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 222–50.
33. Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives Among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).
34. V.N. Datta, 'Punjabi Refugees and Urban Development of Greater Delhi', in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages: Essay on Urban History, Culture and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 442–63; Dipankar Gupta, 'The Indian Diaspora of 1947: The Political and Ethnic Consequences of the Partition with Special Reference to Delhi', in K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *Communalism in India: History, Politics and Culture* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1991), pp. 80–108.

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Part I

Violence

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2

The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946–47: Means, Methods, and Purposes

Paul R. Brass

This chapter focuses on the great massacres that occurred in the huge territory of the Punjab which, in the time before the partition of India, encompassed the present-day federal states of Pakistan Punjab and Indian Punjab, as well as a number of then semi-autonomous princely states. As the violence extended more and more broadly and viciously in this site of political partition, the outgoing British authorities themselves, as will be shown below, struggled to define what was happening, what label to place upon it. Was what was happening simply a series of riots or massacres, or a 'communal war of succession'? The word genocide did not come to the minds of any

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'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946–47: Means, Methods, and Purposes', was prepared initially for the conference on War, Famine and Forced Migrations: Social Engineering and Collective Violence in Today's World, Cortona (Italy), 26–27 May 2000, sponsored by the Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in cooperation with the Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford. It was first published, in Italian, with the title, 'Migrazione Fortaza nel Punjab: India, 1946–47', in Marco Buttino (ed.), *Fuga: Guerre, Carestie e Migrazioni nel Mondo Contemporaneo* (L'Ancora del Mediterraneo: Alberi, 2001), pp. 107–44. It was revised on 12 August 2000 and published in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (2003), 5 (1), 71–101. It was also presented to the Ethnic Conflict Study Group of the Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, on 14 March 2002. Further slight revisions were made and the article published in Paul R. Brass, 'Forms of Collective Violence: Riots, Pogroms, and Genocide in Modern India' (Gurgaon, India: *Three Essays Collective*, 2006). Copyright for that version is held by Paul R. Brass. I hold exclusive copyright on this article, which has been registered with the United States Copyright Office (registration number TX-5-873-726). Permission to republish this article is granted herewith to Oxford University Press Pakistan for publication only in Ian Talbot, *The Independence of India and Pakistan*. I am grateful to Harish Puri for pointing out two errors in the original version of this chapter that have been corrected herein.

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observers at the time. Yet, there were substantial genocidal aspects to what finally developed.

Rather than attempt to define and label these great killings precisely, it is more helpful to think of forms of collective violence as placed along a continuum of overlapping categories that range from riots to pogroms, massacres to genocides. Not only do these categories overlap, but they masquerade for each other, hide behind each other. Pogroms planned and directed by states or political organizations are made to appear as spontaneous riots. So, too, are genocidal attacks on entire populations, including men, women, and children, made to appear 'merely' as massacres perpetrated by enraged or pathological killers or gangs or centrally directed forces.

What gives the genocidal massacres in the Punjab their special character is that they were not ordered by a state, but they were also not merely, or even at all, spontaneous. There was organization and planning that has been largely ignored in the scanty literature on a subject of such enormous violence, but there were also local acts of violence carried out for a multiplicity of reasons and motives that were not genocidal in intent: loot, capture of property, abduction of women. Moreover, much of the larger scale violence was mutual. Grimshaw has captured it well with Fein's term, 'retributive genocide'—applied also to similar actions taking place elsewhere on the subcontinent at the time.[1]

In several of these respects, the Punjab massacres precede and anticipate contemporary forms of genocide and 'ethnic cleansing', retributive and otherwise, most notably the Hutu-Tutsi killings in Rwanda and the massacres and forced migrations of peoples in ex-Yugoslavia: Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. One cannot help also but think of the dangers of further expansion of the mortal cycle of revenge and retribution involving Israel, the occupied territories, and the neighbouring countries in the Middle East.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the dynamic processes through which the genocidal massacres in the Punjab unfolded. To the extent possible, specific responsibilities have been noted, but the underlying argument herein is that culpability became universal.

Most important, however, an attempt has been made to specify the characteristics of the political and politicized communal situation in

the Punjab before and during the massacres and to derive generalizations from them that may apply elsewhere. Unfortunately, genocide is a process that develops, that is not unique, that has not yet seen its end, and whose general aspects, therefore, must be unveiled.

Pakistan

For India's practising politicians, both Hindu and Muslim, the whole context of political choice kept changing during imperial rule as the British offered participation and control of patronage in newly-created institutions at different levels of the Raj, from the municipalities and district boards up through the provinces and ultimately to the central government itself. Each of successive change required dramatic new decisions, compromises, and pacts concerning which categories of people should be 'represented', and in what proportions to their actual percentage of the population. These British-induced changes were preceded or disrupted by mass movements led by the Indian National Congress, and especially Gandhi, as well as demands made by Muslim League leaders, which also required decisions, compromises, and pacts between spokesmen for different categories of the population.

Historians of Muslim politics in north India have a list of significant dates and events that go back to 1857 or even earlier that represent steps on the road to Pakistan, opportunities lost for a Hindu–Muslim settlement, and the decisive moment or moments when Pakistan became inevitable. The further back the date is placed, the more likely it is that the historian providing the date accepts the view that there was an underlying problem or fault line of Hindu–Muslim relations running throughout the subcontinent that required a solution, failing which the creation of two separate nation-states, one predominantly Muslim, one Hindu was inevitable. The later the date is placed, the more likely it is that the historian rejects the latter view and argues that the differences between Hindus and Muslims are modern political inventions—either of the British rulers or the Indian politicians—and that the creation of Pakistan was a consequence of political, not religious struggles for power that could

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have been compromised. In this view, the fateful steps towards partition were all taken between 1937 and 1946.[2]

The last serious attempt in a long sequence of such attempts by Indian parties and British rulers to preserve the unity of India came in 1946 with the Cabinet Mission plan brought to India by three British cabinet ministers. The failure of the Cabinet Mission plan was followed by the replacement of the Governor-General of India, Lord Wavell, by Mountbatten as the last Viceroy and Governor-General of India. Although Mountbatten was sent out with instructions to seek to resolve the differences among the two main contending parties in Indian politics, Congress and the Muslim League, while maintaining the unity of India, he determined very quickly after his arrival that the latter goal was impossible. Mountbatten was sworn in on 24 March 1947. After intensive consultations with all the principal Indian political leaders, he decided with the agreement of all that the demand for Pakistan and the consequent partition of India could not be avoided. On 2 June 1947, Mountbatten presented a partition plan to the principal Indian leaders, which was accepted by all on 3 June and announced over All India Radio.

From this point, the principal historical issue has become why the mass migrations and the horrendous and atrocious violence that accompanied it occurred, and who was responsible for it. The kinds of answers given to these questions parallel those given to the broader question of why Pakistan and partition came about in the first place. Those who hold the view that there was a fundamental fault line of Hindu–Muslim relations in Indian society and politics also believe that the relations were fundamentally hostile and antagonistic and that the violence associated with partition was, therefore, as inevitable as the partition itself. Others argue again that specific leaders, groups, and parties were responsible for not anticipating or not preventing or failing to control, or even contributing behind the scenes to the slaughter that occurred. Mountbatten is blamed for acting too quickly by pushing up the date for Indian and Pakistan independence from June 1948 to 15 August 1947, and failing to take necessary measures to preserve the peace that might have been possible had he been willing to stay the course longer. The three principal Indian leaders—Nehru, Patel, and Jinnah—and their

subordinates are blamed for taking actions deliberately designed to provoke violence or, in the case of Nehru, that inadvertently precipitated violence. A third community—the Sikhs—and its leading political organization, the Akali Dal, and its leaders, particularly Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, have come in for a very great share of the blame for the mass migrations and violence that occurred in its central locus, namely, the Punjab.

With all the political, historical, and polemical argument that has been waged on these issues and all the ink that has been spilt over it, it is a very puzzling and extremely regrettable matter that there has been so little significant, accurate, detailed reporting and accounting of precisely what happened: how the migrations and violence associated with partition did in fact happen, and what were the feelings, attitudes, and consequences for the sufferers.[3] Indeed, the time has almost passed when it is even possible to reconstruct adequately on the basis of oral reports of sufferers,[4] eyewitness accounts, and police records what did happen and how it happened and what were the consequences. Fifty-four years after partition, the numbers of adult survivors and their memories are dying out. As for the police records, few have looked at them, others have been denied access.[5] Moreover, they are almost assuredly inadequate and highly falsified, for the guilt associated with the killings, looting, arson, and abetment of them was shared by many people at the time, including the police, who certainly filed numerous false reports to hide their misfeasance.

Among other things that make this lack of knowledge so regrettable is that, for those interested in the question of displacement of peoples in the twentieth century, and its association with the formation of new states, the massacres and migrations in the Indian Punjab at the time of partition constitute one of the central events of the century, whose consequences have been far from worked out even now. So far, the most dramatic consequences have been three wars between India and Pakistan—in 1948, 1965, and 1971—of which the last involved a further disintegration of the former British Empire with the creation of a third new state, Bangladesh.

But there have also been internal consequences within both India and Pakistan that have continued to reverberate over the past five

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decades, including the ten-year insurrection in the Punjab on the part of Sikh militants against the Indian state in which some 25,000 lives were lost before it was brought to an end between 1991 and 1993, the ongoing insurrection in the Indian-held portion of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the persistence in Indian politics of Hindu–Muslim violence, in the form of riots, anti-Muslim pogroms and massacres. Violent conflicts that owe their origins to the partition of India are recurrent also in Pakistan's major city of Karachi in the province of Sindh between Urdu-speaking refugees from India and their descendants, on the one hand, and Sindhis, Pathans, and other ethnic groups, on the other hand. There have been many other consequences that cast severe doubt upon the desirability of partition as a solution to politicized ethnic, religious, and communal differences, but the subject of this study is neither the factors that led to the partition nor its later consequences, but what actually happened in the living-dying present of the partition-migration-killing months of 1946–47.

Partition

In presenting the discussion of what actually happened and how it happened, this chapter will proceed from the general to the particular, from the national to the regional to the local to the individual. First, to the question of the overall magnitude of the migrations and the casualties associated with them. It is possible to be more confident about the approximate size of the former than the latter. Most estimates of the numbers of people who crossed the boundaries between India and Pakistan in 1947 range between 10 and 12 million, which have led many commentators to describe the movement as the largest migration of its kind in world history to that point. It has proven much more difficult to arrive at a consensus figure on the numbers of persons who died as a consequence of violence that occurred during the impending partition, the partition itself, and after it in the misery of the refugee camps. Estimates range from around 200,000 at the low end to a million and a half at the high end. A consensus figure of 500,000 is often used, but the sources that are most likely closer to the truth give figures that range between

200,000 and 360,000 dead.[6] The lower figures are certainly high enough to suggest the magnitude of the disaster when it is kept in mind that these were 'peacetime' deaths, that is, there was no declared or even undeclared war between India and Pakistan in the Punjab area where the migrations and violence mostly occurred, though war was imminent further north in Kashmir.

Second, it must be kept in mind that the migrations and the violence were regionally confined. They were not all-India phenomena, though there was a great fear at the time that all the Muslims of India, not just those in the Punjab, would begin to move from every point in the country to Pakistan. But it is also true that the violence and migrations were not confined only to the Punjab. There were riots in many parts of northern and western India, some of which led to migrations, and there were major disturbances in other regions than the Punjab, especially in Bengal.

There were several sites of violence in 1946 and 1947 that were of a magnitude not witnessed before in communal riots that had occurred previously during British rule. Because there is some time as well as considerable spatial separation between several of the major outbursts of violence, many commentators have seen them as a kind of phased sequence of revenge and retaliation. Moreover, they are all perceived as subsets of a broader communal conflict between Hindus and Muslims over the future of the entire subcontinent. Both these points of view are distortions of what happened.

It is certainly the case that the partition of the Indian subcontinent into two separate sovereign states rather than one was a consequence of a long list of both deliberate actions and failures to compromise on the part of the three principal parties who created the political present of India and Pakistan, namely, the British authorities, the leaders of the Indian National Congress, and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League. In the course of their deliberate actions and failures, all three participated to greater or lesser extent in the creation of a communal discourse of Hindu–Muslim relations characterized by difference, antagonism, and the potentiality and actuality of communal violence. Moreover, all three were responsible for deliberate or misplaced actions that contributed to the major occasions of violence that did occur before and after partition.

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Further, in the last days of the British Raj, it was not only the case that violence occurred as a consequence of partition, but *violence was a principal mechanism for creating the conditions for partition*.[7] Violence instigated by the political leaders of the country was itself integral to the political process that everyone knew had been brought into play in the past and could always be brought into play when bargaining and compromise failed. It was also used before elections and influenced their results by contributing to the formation of communal identities and the consequent consolidation of the votes of Hindus and Muslims behind opposed political parties.

For example, serious rioting in Calcutta—a thousand miles from the major centres of violence that occurred later in the Punjab—at the end of November, 1945 and the middle of February, 1946 preceded the provincial elections held in Bengal in February. The Great Calcutta Killing of August, 1946 was an immediate consequence of Jinnah's call for 'direct action' for the achievement of Pakistan, which he certainly knew meant violence here and elsewhere in the country. The call for direct action followed the breakdown of negotiations among the three principal parties over the Cabinet Mission Plan. The violence that followed in Calcutta occurred during the tenure of a Muslim League ministry in the province of Bengal, in which government ministers and Muslim League leaders were implicated.[8] The Calcutta violence was mimicked in many other places in northern and western India thereafter and was the principal factor in winning finally the acceptance of the Congress and the British for the partition of the country and the creation of a Muslim-majority state of Pakistan.

In Punjab, which was to be the storm centre of partition, the 1946 elections failed to produce a majority for a single party in the provincial legislature, although the Muslim League emerged here as the largest single party. Efforts to form and maintain a coalition government in the province and the final breakdown in March, 1947 of the coalition that was formed without the League's participation were accompanied by mass agitations that turned violent in the capital city of Lahore, and in Multan and other towns in West Punjab. In the aftermath of killings of Sikhs and Hindus that occurred in Rawalpindi, Attock, and Multan districts, including massacres in

'several villages,'[9] the Sikh leaders and the Congress demanded the partition of the province.

Then, in a stance that many at the time considered foolish but all were soon to feel the consequences of, the Sikh political leaders made it clear that, though they themselves had demanded partition, they would not tolerate a division of the province that went against the interests of their community.[10] Herein lay the crux of the disaster that was to unfold, for there was in fact no possible division of the Punjab that could prevent the division of the Sikhs as well and the loss of their rich agricultural land and numerous shrines they considered sacred. Further, the Sikh leaders also made it clear, though all the other principal actors failed to take it seriously enough, that they anticipated an exchange of population on both sides of the border to be created between the west and east Punjab that was also to be the western border of India and Pakistan. Nor did the Sikh leaders hide the fact that they intended to bring this about by violent means, although they sometimes phrased their intentions vaguely and indirectly. In February, 1967, however, Master Tara Singh, whom I interviewed then, and who was the principal political leader of the Sikh community twenty years earlier, said to me in words I have never forgotten: 'We took the decision to turn the Muslims out.' By this, he meant the decision to attack violently the Muslim population in East Punjab to force them to migrate to the west so that the entire Sikh population in the west Punjab would be able to migrate east to replace them and take their lands and property in exchange for what they would lose in the west.[11]

Punjab

The discussion has slipped in the preceding section to the next, the regional level of focus on the partition and its consequences. Although, as noted above, the deliberate—masked and unmasked—political use of violence was used to press forward the Muslim League demand for partition of the subcontinent, once the decision was made violence subsided in Bengal while it increased in Punjab. In other parts of India, particularly in the northern stretch of territory between what was to become West and East Pakistan, there was

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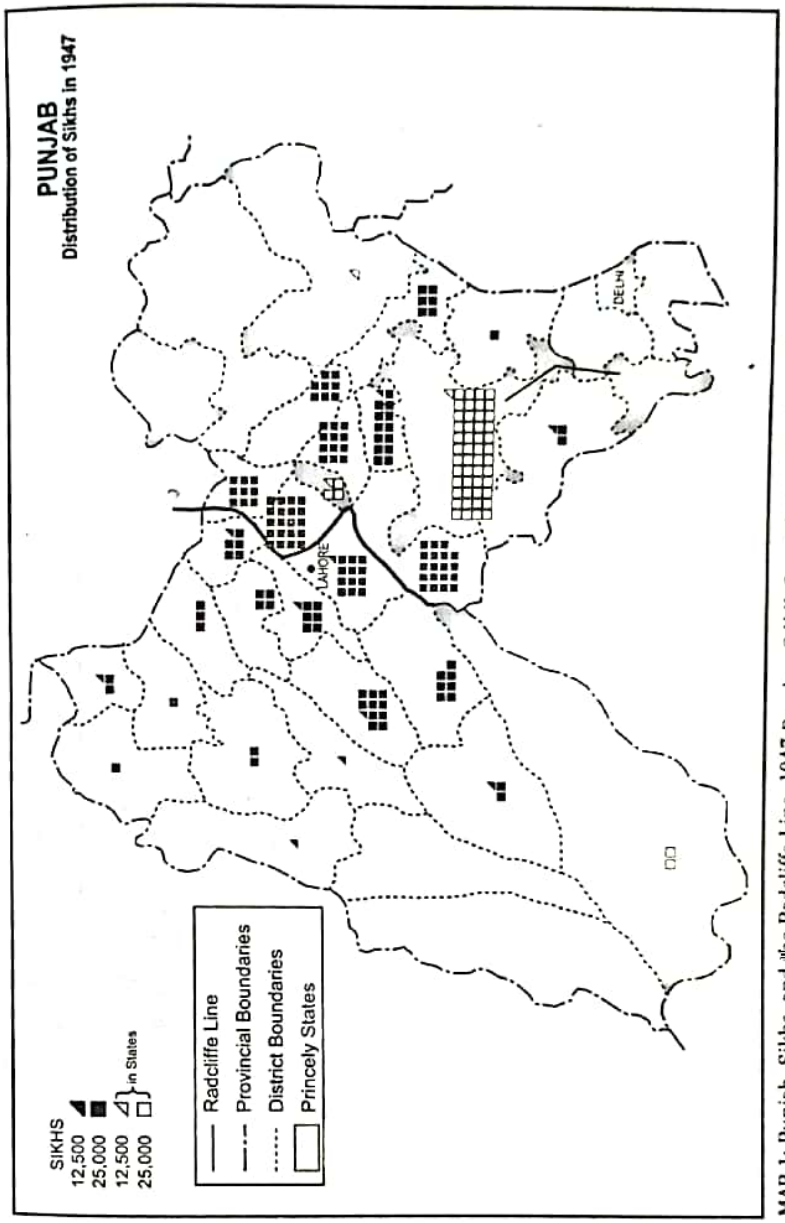
much localized violence that requires separate treatment. For purposes of this study, it is necessary to bring out only the critical difference between the timing and incidence of violence at the western and eastern boundary lines of the new states of India and Pakistan.

Through a series of decisions taken by the central government and in the provinces of Bengal and Punjab, it was agreed by all parties that not only would India as a whole be divided, but so would the former two provinces, each of which was divided roughly in half between its predominantly Muslim and predominantly Hindu populations, a situation that existed nowhere else in India. In Bengal, the Muslim population was predominant in the eastern districts, the Hindus in the western districts. When the decision to divide the province into Muslim-majority and Hindu-majority districts was made, it was obvious that Calcutta, the provincial capital and India's largest city, which was the most disputed site, would remain in India, in West Bengal. The violence that occurred in Bengal before the partition decisions served to consolidate Muslim sentiment behind the Pakistan demand and the Muslim League and to place the League in a controlling political position in the province. Once the decisions were made to partition the country as a whole, and Bengal as well, and once it was accepted that Calcutta could not be placed anywhere but in West Bengal, the demarcation of the boundaries between the two states was relatively simple. There was, therefore, no point in further large scale violence nor any need or desire for cross-migrations that would be of no benefit to either side.

However, in the Punjab, the situation was entirely different. Here, there was a third community, the Sikhs, containing a majority nowhere, but dispersed heavily throughout the central portion of the Punjab in the districts through which the dividing line between West Punjab and East Punjab, India and Pakistan, must necessarily run (see map 1). There was yet another feature of the Punjab that complicated matters and also played a part in the massacres that took place, namely, the interspersion among the districts directly ruled by the British of some sixteen semi-autonomous states whose future was also being determined in separate negotiations at this time. These negotiations cannot concern us here. What is relevant for our



MAP 1: Punjab, Sikhs, and the Radcliffe Line, 1947 Based on O.H.K. Spate, *Geographical Journal*, Vol. CX, 1948, p. 204.

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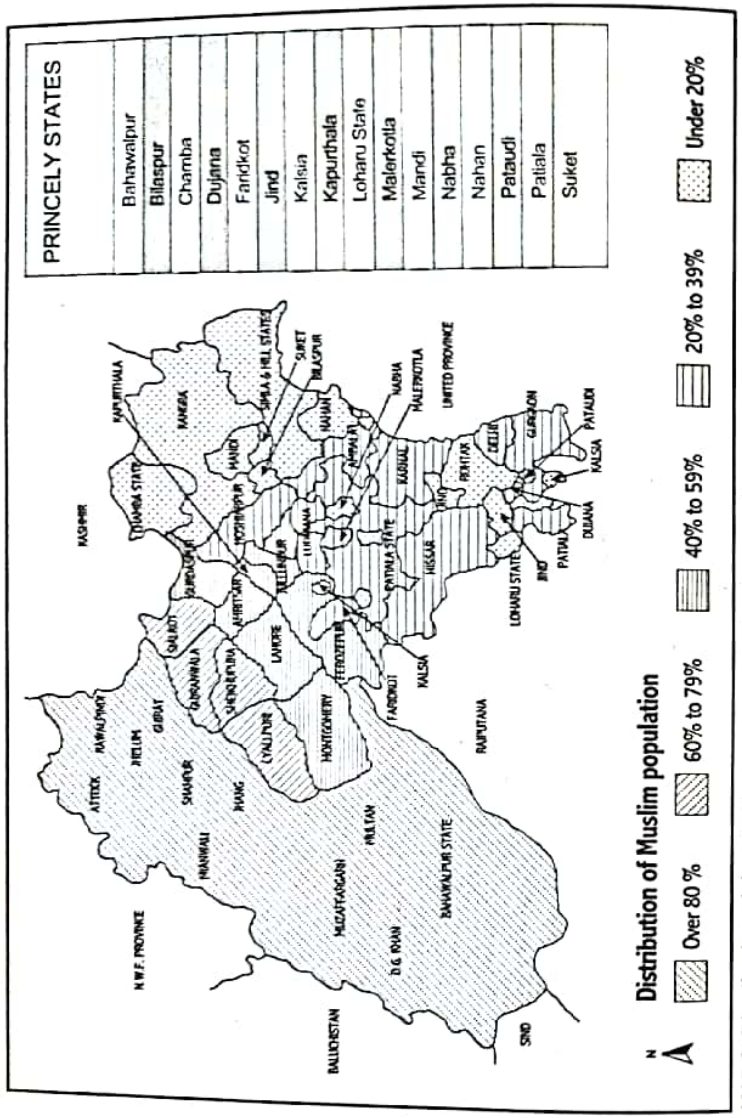

MAP 2: Distribution of the Muslim Population in Pre-Partition Punjab
Adapted from Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab: A Study of Its Effects on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab (1) 1947-56* (Bombay: Asia, 1965), p. 44.

purposes is that it was reported, though never fully documented, that some of these states, ruled by Sikh princes, provided arms and safe haven for Sikh marauding bands roaming about the eastern Punjab districts massacring Muslims in order to impel the entire Muslim populations of those districts to flee to West Punjab/Pakistan. Three of the princely states, Patiala, Faridkot, and Nabha have been repeatedly mentioned in this regard (see map 2).

To settle the matter of the dividing lines between India and Pakistan in the west and the east, two boundary commissions were appointed with different Indian personnel, but with the same British chairman, Sir Cyril Radcliffe.[12] Since there was never any possibility of the members of either boundary commission reaching an agreed solution, it was settled at the outset that the actual decisions, called awards, in both cases would be made by Radcliffe alone after hearing the points of view of all sides on all relevant matters. The charge to the commissions, in effect to Radcliffe, was to demarcate the boundaries in conformity with two principles, namely, the separation of Muslim majority from non-Muslim majority areas in such a manner that no large tract of land would remain in which a majority of one community would be under the domination of the other community in either India or Pakistan. Second, the areas demarcated as Muslim or non-Muslim majority must be contiguous. A third, but clearly subsidiary option was given to the commissions to consider 'other factors' in demarcating the boundaries.

The charge to the commissions, therefore, recognized only two categories: Muslims and non-Muslims. In the Punjab, Sikhs were lumped together with all other non-Muslims. Their fate was left to be considered among the 'other factors' along with such matters—also related to the future of the Sikhs—as the disposition of the world's largest irrigation canal system that, like the Sikhs themselves, criss-crossed any conceivable boundary (based on the primary factor of communal majorities) between West and East Punjab.

That the primary criterion for the assignment of a district to either side was to be the existence of a Muslim or non-Muslim majority was clear from the outset, though numerous attempts were made to obfuscate it, especially from the Hindu and Sikh sides. In fact, the boundary commissions began with what was called a 'notional'

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division between West and East Punjab, based solely on the district population figures from the 1941 census. In the end, despite some heroic efforts on the part of the Hindu and Sikh sides to have numerous 'other factors' considered than the majority population of a district, Radcliffe divided only two districts: Gurdaspur and Lahore (see map 2). In both these cases also, the basic principle of division was the fact that, in subdivisions of these districts, known as *tahsils*, the communal distribution of the population was different from that in the district as a whole. That is, in the larger portion of Gurdaspur district and the smaller portion of Lahore district awarded to India, there were in fact non-Muslim majorities. Since the non-Muslim majorities were in *tahsils* bordering non-Muslim majority districts, the other defining principle of contiguity was not violated.

It would be tedious, excessively time-consuming, and unnecessary to go into further details concerning the arguments and counter-arguments on both sides for and against the ultimate award in the Punjab. What is most important for the purposes at hand is to demonstrate its consequences for the displacement and exchange of populations that occurred and how it occurred. Throughout the weeks preceding the award, Sikh leaders made it clear that they would resort to violence if the award went against the interests of their community as they saw it. They stressed three matters in particular: the solidarity and integrity of the Sikh community, the retention of Sikh-owned land in the rich agricultural tracts that their ancestors had settled, and the retention in the part of Punjab to be awarded to India of their most important gurdwaras and shrines. If all their arguments had been taken seriously, most of the Punjab districts, including some of the overwhelmingly Muslim ones would have had to be awarded to India. However, they offered a suboptimal solution from their point of view, namely, the award to India of most of the central Punjab districts, which would mean that at least two-thirds of the Sikh population would be in districts assigned to India, which would also contain most of their irrigated colony lands and the important gurdwara of Nankana Sahib, where the first Sikh guru is said to have been born.

Since even these demands would have been quite inconsistent with the basic principles set for the partition division and would have likely

led to war between India and Pakistan, there was never any real question that they would be accepted. Although the Sikh leaders continued apparently to clutch at straws in the hope that somehow their demands would be conceded, they also prepared for violence and exchange of population, which they had also been demanding. Although not all the violence that occurred in the East Punjab can be attributed to the Sikhs, there is no doubt that a very large part of it was the result of deliberate actions on the part of Sikh gangs, instigated by their leaders, supported by some of the Sikh princely states and Sikh military, ex-military, and civilian officers, many of whom provided arms to the raiders.[13] In the event, largely but not exclusively as a consequence of their efforts, the entire Muslim population of the eastern Punjab districts migrated to West Punjab and the entire Sikh and Hindu populations moved to East Punjab in the midst of widespread intimidation, terror, violence, abduction, rape, and murder. For the Sikh leaders, this meant that, in the face of all obstacles in their way, they succeeded in achieving their principal objective of the moment, namely, maintaining the solidarity and unity of their community by regrouping its entire population into a more compact area that included several districts where they were now in a majority. Since there were no Muslims left, they were now a majority in relation to a Hindu minority in such districts, but this introduces a new tale that cannot be told here.

It was noted above that violence was a principal mechanism for creating the conditions for partition. The second principal conclusion concerning the relationship between violence, partition, and displacement of peoples is that *the deliberate use of violence was a principal mechanism in changing the terms of partition by forcing the displacement of peoples in such a way as to carry the implications of partition itself to its logical conclusion, namely, the concentration of all peoples defined in categorical terms as belonging to particular religious groups on opposite sides of the partition line*. A third conclusion may be stated in general terms as a hypothesis to be tested in consideration of all other major cases of displacement of peoples in this century, namely, that *the definition of peoples in categorical terms, whether by religion, race, language, or any other cultural marker inevitably disregards the legitimate claims and aspirations*

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of those persons and groups who do not fit the prevailing categories. When such a group is sufficiently large, internally cohesive, militant, and has access to arms, violence is highly likely, if not sure to result. A fourth conclusion is that a situation of this type is especially dangerous when the group left out is interspersed among the groups on whose behalf the partition is made.

Displacement

Let us proceed now to a third level, below the regional to the scenes of violence themselves in the districts, towns, and villages of the Punjab and other parts of north India. While central place has been given herein to the activities of Sikh groups at the regional level, it must be stressed that they were far from alone in engaging in deliberate acts of violence, massacre, rape, and abduction to force the migration of peoples from one side of the new border to the other. Such acts were carried out extensively also by Muslim groups and gangs in the West Punjab who attacked Hindus and Sikhs and, though much less is known about it, by Hindu groups and gangs in East Punjab who, like the Sikh gangs, attacked the Muslim population in East Punjab to compel its movement west.

How was it done? And how far were the activities of the violent groups and gangs part of a general plan to induce migration for political purposes? Although there is strong evidence that there was a general plan instigated by Sikh political leaders, it is probable, if not certain, that much of the violence and other abuses committed had other, more limited motives. Indeed, it is generally the case—and this is a fifth conclusion—that *a very large portion of the offenses committed on the violent occasions that are classified as arising from communal, religious, nationalist, and racial antagonisms between peoples display local and personal motives that have little or nothing to do with the categorical explanations applied to them*. This point has been argued and demonstrated elsewhere.[14] The argument has recently been applied also to the Punjab partition riots by Jalal, who argues that much of the violence committed by 'gangs representing majorities against minorities' defined in communal terms actually reflected 'battles for control in urban and rural

localities that were as vital to them personally as they were to the purported interests of their respective communities.'[15] In other words, such actions arose from mixed motives at the least, if not from entirely local and personal ones. The definition of the situation as a war between whole communities provided a cover, an excuse, and a legitimation for a multiplicity of other interests to come into play and to use violent means that would not in normal times be available to them to achieve their goals.

The means used included arson, loot, murder, rape, and abduction. Arson, for example, was used to great effect by Muslim gangs in the Muslim-majority city of Lahore and the non-Muslim majority city of Amritsar. Governor Evan Jenkins reported to Mountbatten on 31 May 1947 that his administration had been 'defeated by incendiarism' in both these cities. Although there had also been stabbings, there had been 'practically no rioting,' the absence of which indicated secretive pre-planning with the deliberate intention to force Hindus and Sikhs from their homes and properties. Jenkins went so far as to compare the situation he faced in these two cities to the problems 'in London during the fire blitz.'[16]

Looting soon became a virtually universal feature of the attacks by Muslims on non-Muslims in the West Punjab districts, in which it could not be said whether the reasons were communal or pecuniary or both. All that is certain is that the communal situation made such looting inevitable and acceptable to nearly everyone except the victims.

Raiding that turned into a kind of communal warfare also took place over large areas. Jenkins again reported on 1 June that, in Gurgaon district in southeastern Punjab, 'raiding and counter raiding by Meos [a Muslim group] and Hindus' was going on in an area of 'about 800 square miles' during which 'at least 50 villages' had been destroyed.[17] A month later, in one of the most contested areas of the central Punjab, the districts of Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, and Jullundur, Jenkins reported that raids had been made on Muslim villages in attacks that he thought had been committed by Sikhs. He referred as well to 'various villages in the Lahore district [that] are disturbed.' He also reported that a train had 'been held up' in Gurdaspur and that 'a regular communal riot' had occurred 'at Garhshankar, a small

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town in the Hoshiarpur district.' In all these rural attacks, Jenkins thought that 'the aggressors' had been Sikhs. He remarked further that he had 'the impression that [the Sikhs] have made certain preparations, some of which are now being disclosed prematurely.' Sikhs were in possession of bombs and firearms, of which a stock of the former apparently exploded by mistake 'in one of the buildings attached to the Tarn Taran Gurdwara,'[18] one of the most important of the Sikh gurdwaras.

It is evident that there were a number of different kinds of actions taking place in the above districts: outright communal warfare between particular Hindu and Muslim castes and tribes involving armed raids by groups from both sides on the villages of the other side; one-sided aggressive raids by Sikhs deliberately aimed at forcing the Muslims out; and in one town, what Jenkins calls 'a regular communal riot.' The latter term is generally used in South Asia to describe violent urban engagements between large crowds of persons from opposing religious communities, Hindu–Muslim or Muslim–Sikh. It is also clear from Jenkins' account that he believed that Sikhs were acting deliberately according to a plan, which had been 'disclosed prematurely' by the inadvertent explosion of bombs in a gurdwara and that these attacks were early signs of many more to come. He was, of course, right.

Jenkins also referred to the holding up of a train, but he does not say what happened in this particular case. However, the holding up of trains and the massacre of all those from the opposite community of the gangs that held them up was soon to become the virtual hallmark of the partition violence. Indeed, a day later, Mountbatten was informed by telephone from Mr Abbott that there had been 'four attacks on, or attempts to interfere with, trains in the past two or three days.'[19]

It is itself a matter of great interest that, in the circumstances prevailing in the Punjab in the months before and after partition, there was a great variety of types of violent and other appalling actions that cannot easily be summed up under any single rubric. In such circumstances, precise and accurate information becomes difficult for the authorities to obtain, and in most cases, is not

available at all. Any summary description of them, therefore, is bound to simplify events and diffuse responsibility.

Is there any progression in a situation of violent displacement of peoples of the type under discussion in this? Jenkins thought there was in the Punjab. In an 4 August memorandum to Mountbatten, he divided the violence that had occurred since March into 'three main phases.' In the first phase, as he saw it, from 4 March to 20 March, the violence began with rioting in Lahore City, extended then to several of the other cities in West Punjab, was followed by 'rural massacres' in several districts involving heavy casualties and 'much burning.' By 21 March, he reported 'that order had been restored everywhere.'

In the second phase, between 21 March and 9 May, the progression was from 'minor incidents in many districts' to 'serious rioting and burning in Amritsar 11–13 April with some repercussion in Lahore,' then undefined 'trouble' in 'a small town in Gurgaon district, followed by the first outbreak along the Mewat in the same district.' Thus, a breather in which order is restored followed by 'minor incidents' then 'serious rioting and burning' then an 'outbreak' of the widespread violence mentioned before between the Muslim Meos and Hindus. In both phases, it should be noted that the disorders extended over a very wide area. Moreover, it is impossible that they were all coordinated. But neither is it possible to believe that they were either spontaneous or mere expressions of mass frenzy. It yet remains for serious research to be done on these incidents to uncover what happened and how in each case on which such information might be found in archives and retrospective interviews.[20]

But let us turn now to Jenkins' third phase, from '10th May onwards.' Here Jenkins uses a summary term to describe what is now happening, namely, 'the communal "war of succession".' Once again, it all begins in the most precious, contested, central Punjab cities of Lahore and Amritsar with 'incendiarism, stabbing, and bombing.' Then come 'serious incidents reported from various districts, particularly Gujranwala and Hoshiarpur.' Then 'village raiding begins, especially in the central Punjab districts of Amritsar, Lahore, Ferozepore, Jullundur, and Hoshiarpur.' Finally, a 'revival' of the 'disturbances in Gurgaon with 140 villages burnt and very heavy

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casualties.'[21] In this final phase, Jenkins also notes that 'urban rioting' was 'almost unknown.' Why?

. Urban collective violence that takes the form called rioting is normal, 'peacetime' violence that presumes the existence of relatively stable, recognized authority. A riot takes place either between two groups—religious, racial, or other—or between one group and the police. When the police, acting on their own, or with the complicity of higher authority, act against one group, a riot becomes a pogrom or a massacre. In either case, authority continues to exist, whether it acts effectively or ineffectively, restores order impartially or restores order after acting in behalf of one group and against another. In a communal war of succession, there is no authority, though there may be a government, as there was in both parts of Punjab before and after the British left. There being no authority, there is no need for mere rioting.

But what does Jenkins mean by using the term communal war of succession? The succession was already determined by the partition plan. Muslims were to predominate in the West and non-Muslims in the East Punjab. So, it was not just a war to determine who was to rule. It was a war to determine which communities were to occupy the newly defined space and in what proportions. We have seen above that this was the primary issue for the Sikhs: re-groupment to provide for themselves territories in which they would be concentrated, and where possible, in a majority in what Sikh leaders then and since have continued to describe as a 'homeland' of their own. Their actions, therefore, are clear and understandable, however outrageously and viciously executed.

The leaders of the new governments-to-be in India and Pakistan had both proclaimed that the minorities would be safe and protected in their existing places and should not move. But authority had already disintegrated or become partial as a consequence of their own inability to agree on almost all practical matters and of their own deliberate actions to instigate violence. The standard explanation for the spread of collective private violence throughout most of the districts of Punjab is that a cycle of revenge and retaliation had set in wherein Sikhs and Hindus in central and eastern Punjab reacted in a 'communal frenzy' against Muslim attacks on Sikhs and Hindus

in western Punjab and vice versa. This explanation cannot stand against the evidence of organization, preplanning, calculation, the acting out of local conflicts, and the pursuit of loot and women. To the extent there was a communal war of succession—and the evidence suggests that Jenkins was correct to use this term as an encompassing aspect of the third phase—it was a war for the monopolistic enjoyment of power and privilege on the part of Muslim organizations in West Punjab and Hindus in East Punjab and for the pursuit of a politically effective concentration of their numbers on the part of Sikh organizations and leaders. But even during this phase, it is evident that most of the raiders were making use of the war to act with impunity for their own personal and local ends.

As the date of partition neared, moreover, the agents of state authority, the police and soldiery became 'unsteady' and gave clear indication of their intention to desert from one side to the other depending on their communal affiliation. Jenkins complained throughout that the amount of force available to him was inadequate for the troubles anticipated and the troubles that came. While the police and army became increasingly unreliable, the need for the 'use of force on massive scale' to deal effectively with widespread 'rural raiding' became clear. But neither adequate nor reliable force was now available.[22]

On the other hand, the gangs that were operating in the countryside were both 'well armed and well led,'[23] in some cases 'by retired army officers,'[24] of whom there was an ample supply in this area of India that provided a substantial and heavily Sikh component to the British armed forces in the Second World War. Several of the political organizations also had paramilitary formations, whose activities have not been at all adequately documented during these times. The RSS, the leading organization of militant Hinduism then and now, was said to have more than 58,000 members, the National Guards formed by the Muslim League leaders 39,000, and the Sikh Akali Fauj [Force/Army] 8,000 members.[25] In addition, available throughout the countryside in the districts with Sikh populations were Sikh paramilitary formations known as *jathas*. These units were by their nature decentralized, associated with the gurdwaras and with the Akali Dal, which in turn controlled the committee, known as the

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Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC), whose function was to oversee the gurdwaras. These *jathas* normally engage in a variety of activities on behalf of their local Sikh communities, including everything from religious preaching to political mobilization to 'defence'. Further, while all Sikhs are enjoined to carry a steel weapon with them at all times, the *jathedars* (*jatha* members) usually wear rather impressive long swords. It is certain that these *jathas* were active in the violence during partition.[26] Since they were also semi-official Sikh groupings, it is extremely likely that their actions, however decentralized their organization, were to some extent coordinated and that they could have been stopped by a firm statement of the leadership of the Akali Dal and/or the SGPC.

All these paramilitary organizations, however, acted as if without any central command. Even Jenkins thought there was no set of leaders whose arrest and detention might have broken lines of communication and reduced the level of violence. Although he was convinced that 'Tara Singh and his associates' were themselves engaged in instigating, planning, and encouraging particular acts of violence, he thought that village raiding—this most troublesome and virtually impossible form of violence to control—was 'not specifically directed' by them, but was 'undoubtedly the result of their general propaganda.'[27] Another way of putting the matter is that there was no clear chain of command between political leaders and rural gangs, but that speeches and statements were made and signals were given by known political leaders that deliberately encouraged and sanctioned violence, both of the *jathas* and unknown 'gangs.'

Moreover, it was assumed that, if all the principal leaders made statements to signal that the time had come to stop the violence, it would have some effect. In fact, Mountbatten pressed the leaders of the three communities during the deliberations of the Boundary Commission to issue a joint statement that minorities on both sides of the borders, however they were drawn, would be protected and that they, the leaders, would accept whatever award was made by the commission and that their communities should also accept the award. Although a press note was issued on 24 July to that effect on the part of the two future governments of India and Pakistan,[28] it rang hollow,[29] especially since the Sikh leaders continued to reiterate that

they would not accept an unjust award. Since any award under the terms given to the Commission could only be perceived by the Sikhs as unjust, this in itself was a call to violence. Ultimately, after most of the forced migrations had been set in motion by rural violence, Tara Singh was persuaded to make a statement calling for the end of attacks by Sikh *jathas* operating from and returning to the sanctuaries of the princely states on westward-moving trains.[30] That it proved impossible to obtain satisfactory and timely statements from the principal leaders of the main contending parties appealing for the avoidance of violence surely indicates a degree of complicity in the violence that did take place, but it does not imply that it could have been thus avoided completely or brought to a quick end nor that all or most of the local violence was politically motivated.

Massacre and Retributive Genocide

Let us look now a bit more closely at the forms of violence, their ostensible purposes, and their effects upon those affected. The most dramatic form of violence was massacre, the attack by huge crowds upon villages, trains, refugee camps, and long files of migrants moving from one side of the Punjab to the other, in which large numbers of people were killed, including men and women, children and old people. A few days before independence and partition, it was reported from the Punjab that 'the disturbances are producing an average daily killing of about 100 people with occasional large raids in which 70 to 80 people are killed at one fell swoop.'[31] However, massacres of much larger numbers were common even in villages with relatively small populations. Nor are the numbers of killed at all exact. Recorded figures estimated from eyewitness accounts are rounded off approximations: 4,000 killed in a village or small town here, 3,500 at a railway station there, and so forth.[32]

In the conventional accounts of the partition violence, these massacres formed a chain of 'revenge and retaliation,' presumed to be for its own sake.[33] Such a view leaves virtually all important questions unanswered, including the obviously critical ones of how the first link in the chain is forged and how the last is broken. However, this view has an important function in the sustaining of

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violence. It is a view that serves violence. Moreover, the first link in the imputed chain almost always differs, depending on the side that gives the account.

Insofar as Punjab is concerned, for Sikhs and Hindus, especially the former, the massacres of Sikhs and Hindus in Rawalpindi district[34] and in other parts of the far western Punjab in Rawalpindi Division (administrative unit comprising several districts) in March 1947 was the first link in the chain for which vengeance was required and was taken, especially in August and September, in the days before and the weeks after the partition award. But it has been already argued, and there is further evidence on the matter, that Sikh leaders were not moved only or even primarily by the desire for revenge and retaliation, but by a conscious political motivation to regroup and consolidate the community. Thus, Jenkins records interviews held on 11 July 1947 with Jathedar Mohan Singh and Sardar Harnam Singh, following upon an interview the previous day with Giani Kartar Singh, in which the Rawalpindi massacre of Sikhs figured, but which now counted only as a useful precedent in the Sikh leaders' minds for what needed to be done. Since, they argued, the Sikhs had already been driven out of Rawalpindi Division, leaving their land and property behind, and since the Sikhs could not countenance remaining under Muslim rule in Pakistan, there was only one possible solution.

> The only solution was a very substantial exchange of population. If this did not occur, the Sikhs would be driven to facilitate it by a massacre of Muslims in the Eastern Punjab. The Muslims had already got rid of Sikhs in the Rawalpindi Division and much land and property there could be made available to Muslims from the East Punjab. Conversely the Sikhs could get rid of Muslims in the East in the same way and invite Sikhs from the West to take their places.

Jenkins noted further that 'their plan was to act in a big way immediately after the transfer of power.'[35] In short, the Sikhs would massacre the Muslims in the East in the same way Sikhs had been massacred in the West and land and property would then be exchanged as well as population. And so it was. In this case, moreover, it is clear that emotions of the moment did not lead to immediate

'revenge and retaliation' since 'there was comparative peace for several months' after the killings of Sikhs in Rawalpindi district.[36] But, trouble from the Sikh side began on a relatively small scale two weeks before the boundary award. The British repeatedly affirmed in one way or another that Sikhs were acting as a community, evidently to a purpose, and presumably with some coordination, as in the following report on 1 August.

> There is going to be trouble with the Sikhs. When, and how bad, the Governor cannot yet say. Raids on Muslim villages have begun in Amritsar and Lahore district and along the Jullundur Hoshiarpur border, and there have been four attacks on, or attempts to interfere with, trains in the past two or three days. Muslim casualties in Amritsar Rural area alone since night of 30th/31st July are 23 killed, including 3 women and 2 children, and 30 wounded.[37]

In this report, it is 'the Sikhs' as a community who are acting. Village raids have begun. More action is to come. Muslims are being targeted for slaughter.

Jenkins remarked on 4 August that the 'urban slaughter was without precedent' even in the first phase of violence in the Punjab and that 'the rural massacres were new.'[38] These massacres appear in lists and documents on the printed page as nothing but events and statistics, with some expressions to suggest the enormity and viciousness of the carnage, such as 'unprecedented,' 'slaughter,' 'outrages,' 'gruesome,' and the like. How far should one go in describing these events and for what purpose? Butalia has sought to individualize these killings through interviews 40 and 50 years after the facts with persons who witnessed them and who did some killing of their own. One favourable reviewer of her book remarked about it that the individuals whose accounts are presented 'pass before us in an endless procession of misery and distress. . . . Each emerges as a complex human being, far removed from the mere statistical data to which he or she had been reduced in the dusty pages of the official reports of the partition.'[39] But what do we gain or learn from such accounts? One cannot be sure, but some of the values to be gained and the lessons to be learned from them may be suggested, all of which, however, appear ambiguous.

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First, we may suggest that reducing the killings to lists of statistics and describing them as links in a chain of retaliation and revenge is dehumanizing while individualizing them exposes precisely their effects, makes them real, causes revulsion in our hearts and minds that may contribute to the advancement of the cause of human rights. But things are not so simple, for her accounts—confirmed by the few other reports available to us on these matters—reveal a different kind of 'chain', one of complicity in violence that blurs the boundaries between killers and their victims. It appears that untold numbers of women and children were 'saved' by their own fathers and brothers by being slaughtered to prevent their capture, abduction, rape, and conversion during these raids. One Mangal Singh, for example, during an attack upon his village cut off the heads of 17 women and children in his own family, one by one in full view of all members of the family, though he and his son ultimately escaped, reached safety in India, and fostered new families.[40] In this and other families also, women marched to the village wells one by one and threw themselves in to avoid capture by suicide. In other cases, villagers built huge bonfires put to the same purpose.

> They [the villagers under attack] collected about fifty quintals [10,000 pounds] of firewood in the centre of the village and they built a huge fire and in that they threw all the children. Their own children. Some children escaped earlier on, otherwise all the other children who were in the village at that time, burned themselves. This they did with the motive that they escaped being forcibly converted by the Muslims. They did not want them to be converted so they burned them. The parents threw in their own sons, and even then the parents also burnt themselves in the same fire. They said that we won't disgrace our own village.[41]

All these persons are considered not victims of violence, but martyrs in their community. In Mangal Singh's village and in other known cases, the Sikh community, in the last case the Hindus. But the complicity in violence does not end here, for the tales of their martyrdom are recited every year in the gurdwaras visited by the survivors, thus keeping alive memories that may in turn rekindle a desire to 'seek revenge for the loss of their relatives and homes 50 years ago.'[42] Indeed, such preserved memories do in fact serve the

purpose in countless communal riots that have occurred in India since Independence of justifying for Hindus and the police the killing of Muslims, seen in categorical terms as lovers of Pakistan who should go to Pakistan like those who did so in 1947.

There is another question that emerges when the killings are individualized. Does it matter to know how people were killed? The few accounts available that tell us make grim reading.[43] Though some guns and bombs were available, the predominant methods used were cutting and axing of people to bits or burning them alive.[44] Those cut and axed were thrown into canals or wells, the bodies of those burned alive left to smoulder in the ruins of their homes and huts. Babies were split apart by the legs and impaled on spears. Groups of people of both sexes and all ages were tied together and set on fire to burn to death slowly while the perpetrators and those in hiding could hear their moans, groans, and shrieks.

For what purpose were such methods used? Communal hatred fuelling mass frenzy is a common answer, but equally likely are the availability of only certain types of methods and weapons, the rush that comes to some people by acts of brutality and killing, and the exercise of total power over the lives of others. But perhaps the most important point to make is that all sides used the same methods. The available records make it clear enough that Muslims and Sikhs both did so, but there is a myth that persists up to the present that Hindus had more difficulty in perpetrating such acts. The non-availability to scholars in India of records and documents that would prove otherwise has helped to perpetuate what is certainly a myth.

The fact that persons from all sides engaged in acts of violence and brutality, participated in killings and massacres, leads to the possible conclusion, unacceptable to many people, that no one group is to blame. The 'revenge and retaliation' point of view denies that possibility by explaining the violence coming from one's own side as understandable, even justified by the actions of the other. However, for those who refuse to accept such denial, the sombre conclusion presents itself that violence and brutality are part of human nature, that we all share in its occurrence, if not in action, then in thought, feeling, and speech. Resistance to this conclusion takes a nearly universal form in all accounts of the partition violence and most

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accounts of the major riots that have occurred in India since then. It is to counter the glaring instances of human viciousness portrayed in these accounts with counter-examples of human compassion that crossed communal boundaries in which persons from one community concealed or otherwise protected their neighbours. From such counterexamples spring hope and inspiration.

But such hopes are chimeras. They seek to deny what does not in any case exist—namely, a common human nature[45] that encompasses violence in us all—with the claim that there are good and bad amongst us. The latter, of course, is true, but there is also good and bad within us all by all prevailing moral standards. The problem with dealing in this way with the discomfort that arises from confronting violence of the sort that pervaded the Punjab in 1947 is its reductionist character, reducing the multiplicity of sources, uses, motives, and purposes of violence to a single source: the nature of man. In a word, it is one of the many devices by which we avoid, diffuse, and displace blame.

A further question concerns the relationship between violence and political authority. There was certainly a breakdown of political authority in the Punjab that made possible the commission of such large scale and widespread atrocities. Such a connection often allows scholarly and other observers of violence to argue that, in ethnically/religiously/communally divided societies, a strong state is a prerequisite for the maintenance of civil order. Some go so far as to argue that states such as the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia at least prevented pogroms against Jews—in the case of the Soviet Union—and the interethnic warfare that has followed upon the disintegration of both states. This argument, however, falls to the ground when confronted with the realities of the massacres in Punjab, namely, the extensive, active complicity of the authorities and the agents of state force in the massacres. For, it is not true that authority broke down completely in the Punjab.[46] Rather, authority and state power divided and acted in a malignly hostile manner. Of course, the leaders of these new states did not condone the violence, but their subordinates were able to do so with impunity.

One example will illustrate the point here concerning the relationship between authority and supposedly spontaneous mass violence even in a time of apparent anarchy.

> Upto [sic] August 10, Mr Said Zaman held the office of Deputy Commissioner [of Montgomery District] and till then the district remained peaceful. According to general opinion, his impartiality and firmness kept the unruly elements in check. He was succeeded by Raja Hassan Akhtar, an avowed Muslim Leaguer, whose arrival appeared to encourage the Muslim gangsters. . . . On the night of August 19, two Muslims, walking in the street during curfew hours, were fatally shot by Sikh soldiers on patrol duty. . . . A Hindu Magistrate, posted at Montgomery, at the time, attended a meeting in the Deputy Commissioner's room on August 24. The Deputy Commissioner openly said that all Sikhs must be shot or killed at sight and that the Hindus could, for the time being, be spared. Some Muslim refugees from East Punjab had, by now, arrived in Montgomery, and they were located in a camp near the railway station. Their presence made it impossible for any non-Muslim to reach the railway station with any degree of safety.[47]

Assuming for the sake of argument the accuracy of this report—which, of course, cannot be proven since neither the governments of India nor Pakistan has released the records to contemporary scholars—there are three points to note here. First, impartial authority did exist even in the central districts of the Punjab up to the eve of the boundary award and those who exercised it could be effective to a degree in maintaining civil order. Second, the impartial deputy commissioner (district magistrate) was replaced by a politically biased magistrate, said to be a known supporter of the Muslim League, which then encouraged 'the Muslim gangsters.' He soon demonstrated his partiality by reacting to the killing by Sikh soldiers of two Muslims disobeying curfew orders. He, in effect, then declared war on the Sikh community as a whole, calling for the murder of their members. Third, the presence of Muslim refugees from East Punjab, presumed to be eager for 'revenge and retaliation' at a camp near the railway station left the Sikhs with no possible exit. While it is certain, therefore, that the conditions of the transfer of power from the British in Punjab made it impossible to maintain civil

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order, it is equally clear that what authority did exist often acted to make matters worse.

Let us consider now the matter of spontaneity and mass frenzy as the sources of the attacks of persons from one community upon another as opposed to pre-planned and organized attacks. Herein lies one of the most serious forms of obfuscation of this type of violence. Its very character is such as to make meaningless such distinctions. There can be no massacre from the side of the populace without both planning and enthusiasm. Massacres by the authorities require only planning and discipline, but popular participation requires enthusiasm, however it is encouraged. To call such enthusiasm induced by rumour, imminent danger, deep-seated prejudice, or any other such precipitants 'spontaneous' is also to justify it and to relocate blame from the actual perpetrators onto an objectified, frenzied mass of nameless people.

The ordinary people, however, return the trick. Thus, the person who gave the account of the deliberate burning to death of all the children in the village cannot, of course, blame himself/herself or his/her relations for this tragedy. 'It was just the politics of the leaders that led to the riots and violence, which led to calamities and to partition.'[48] All the children of the village were burned to death, except those who had escaped earlier, in order to prevent their forced conversion to Islam and to avoid disgracing the village, but the fault lay with the politicians. Moreover, the action was deliberate, hardly spontaneous. It is not imaginable that parents throw their children in the flames to an unspeakable death spontaneously. So, even though the actions are deliberate, the fault lies elsewhere.

Further, it is an aspect of the political game, engaged in by the preeminent leaders and highest authorities to insist that the actions of persons from one's own community were spontaneous, while those from the other side were pre-planned. A fine example is provided by a letter from Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah's principal lieutenant and soon to be Prime Minister of Pakistan, to Mountbatten on 31 May 1947. He wrote after visiting the district of Gurgaon, where the widespread communal warfare between Hindu and Muslim castes/tribes was in progress, to say that the situation there was 'not merely a spontaneous flare-up of communal feelings in this part of the country, but a

planned, pre-meditated and well organized attack that has been launched with the object of completely suppressing the Muslim community of Meos numbering about one million and forming a more or less compact Muslim belt in a predominantly Hindu area.' He adduced much evidence on the basis of the information he had gathered to support his argument, including the usual pinpointing of a precise moment for the beginning of 'the present trouble' in 'a treacherous attack by Hindu Jats on a Muslim village.' He made many suggestions for controlling the situation, concluding with the dire warning that 'an attack on a minority on such a big and organized scale in the neighbourhood of India's capital may have most unfortunate repercussions in remoter parts of the country, if it is not promptly checked.'[49] Those 'repercussions', of course, occurred on a massive scale during the Prime Ministership of Liaquat Ali Khan, who proved no better at preventing them than the British or Indian authorities.

But what did the murderers think they were doing? How did they justify their actions? We have the testimony of the villagers who performed or witnessed the acts of cutting off the heads of their children or consigning them to the flames and the killing of their women or the latters' suicides. Their explanation of their actions is, moreover, understandable if not excusable. They acted to save their honour, the reputation of their families and that of their villages—though the last is a bit strange since they were about to leave their villages forever—and to prevent forced conversion of their children to another religion. Can one think of any hidden motives in such actions?

However, what were the justifications, motivations, purposes of the attacking killers? We have so far examined in detail only three: the forced expulsion of the opposed communities on both sides of the new boundary to establish a Muslim state free of troublesome minorities, on the one hand, and a consolidation and re-groupment of the Sikh community, on the other hand, and revenge and retaliation on all sides. But, it has been argued above in connection with these justifications that they can in no way be accepted at face value. Justifications for the infliction of pain and sorrow on oneself, even by such heinous acts as the destruction of one's own children,

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ring more true than those provided for the infliction of pain and sorrow on others.

Boundaries

Another common metaphor for a succession of riotous events is the term, 'wave', something that washes over a large territory. This metaphor is even vaguer than that of the chain. A wave swells up from below, reaches a crescendo, then dwindles to calm waters, which then recede. 'Starting in August 1946 India suffered an unprecedented wave of communal violence for nearly a year.' The beginning point in this account is August 1946, the end point 'the Punjab carnage of March 1947.' What swells up is 'inflamed communal passion', the 'common factor' in all the violence, but 'intimately connected with developments in institutional politics centring on the Pakistan movement.'[50] From this point of view, then, the massacres beginning in August, 1947 must constitute a new wave.

Das's account of the 1946 wave of riots that, in his mind, also extend to March 1947 in the Punjab, encompasses a considerable array of motives, purposes, and meanings. Ultimately, however, he gives central place to both organization and political inspiration as the increasingly critical aspects of the violence. Recent work on the Punjab, however, has tended more in the opposite direction. While acknowledging that communal and political factors were important, these works argue that the focus on them has ignored a multiplicity of others that were involved. Jalal emphasizes the 'localized and personalized nature of the battle for social space' in the towns and villages of Punjab, which took place under the cover of the apparently communal and religious character of the overall conflict.[51] The struggle over territory in the Punjab as a whole was mirrored at the local level in 'strategies to appropriate the property of neighbours.'[52] Likewise, the women of the opposite side were also appropriated. Many women were raped on the site of the attacks, then killed. However, to an extent that appears from the limited available evidence to have been very great indeed, a huge number of the younger and most appealing women were abducted, often passed among the abductors for their enjoyment, but also taken possession of by

particular men who ultimately married them after their conversion. Jalal argues that women were 'the main victims' of the partition violence,[53] a view well supported also by the accounts provided in Butalia's work. Moreover, the women were often twice and thrice victimized: first, by their abduction; second, by their 'recovery' after partition against their will in many cases; third, by the rejection and loss of their children born after their abduction but before their recovery by their original families.[54]

The rape and abduction of women constitute a dishonouring of the male members of the community and of the community as a whole. In many societies, women are also seen as more traditional, conservative, religious than their men and thereby as upholders of the fundamental values of the community. Thus, conversion of women to another religion is also a threat to the community as a whole.

But there is yet something more involved. Women are boundary markers. They are more vulnerable and potentially more accessible than men. They are also coveted by men irrespective of the boundaries.[55] Faith crumbles before the perceived charms of women seen as beautiful, with whom an illicit and concealed relationship across boundaries poses no—or at least manageable—moral issues for the men so involved. However, for continued acceptance of the male as well as children born of the relationship in the man's own community, an open liaison requires the conversion and marriage of the woman.

Those men who killed their own women—wives, sisters, and daughters—saved their honour and that of their community, but they also prevented boundary crossing. The greatest trespass of honour and boundary is the birth of children to the abducted woman, inevitable in a traditional society where birth control does not exist. When an abducted woman is found and 'recovered,' her newly born children are rejected. What is rejected is the visible stain on both the woman and the man, the evidence both of the handling of the woman by another man, thereby dishonouring the husband, and of the crossing of the boundary. The child is rejected also because, simply, it is not one's own, but another's, rejected by the community for the same reason.

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Why in the world then did the men want to bring back into their families the women who had been abducted?[56] Persuasion from their wives, the mothers of the abducted girls? Their own feelings of love and loss? Recovery somehow of one's honour demonstrated by the ability at last to perform the man's duty of protecting his daughter? Idle hope that the women had been merely abducted and not violated? Recreation of the boundary between one's community and the other? Probably some combination of such feelings were involved in each case. But, the women remained polluted even when readmitted into their families and communities.[57] They would not be considered acceptable marriage partners even after giving up the children to whom they had given birth.

Abduction and forcible conversion of women occurred in both the divided territories, that is, in Bengal as well as Punjab, two quite different cultures despite the fact that the predominant religious communities in both were Hindu and Muslim. Moreover, it appears from available accounts in both territories that the rape, abduction, conversion and marriage of abducted women were phenomena rarely witnessed in the more ordinary communal riots of the past.[58] Why now and not earlier? I believe it is not merely a matter of dishonouring, but of boundary crossing and defiling, which became important when it was clear that territorial boundaries between communities were to be drawn. Women are simultaneously critical and incidental. Through women men multiply their race, increase their numbers. They are, in this way critical. But they are also incidental. They may be captured and put to good use, unlike men of the other community, who represent a physical danger, and even when converted, are distrusted and not fully accepted.

Fictions

The partition decision was based on the fiction that there were only two categories of the population of 400 million Indians whose interests were to be considered: Muslims and non-Muslims. In practice, as we have seen, the Sikhs made a most effective claim for being considered a third party, indeed a decisive third party. Scant consideration, however, was given to ascertaining the desires of the

other non-Muslims living on both sides of the notional boundary, who had neither sufficient numbers, cohesion, determination, or collective will to do anything to deny their categorical consignment into one or the other two categories. These groups included Christians, Scheduled Castes,[59] Mazhabi and Ramdasia Sikhs, and Ahmadiyyas. Representations on behalf of these groups were presented before the Punjab Boundary Commission. All those who claimed to speak for all the groups except the Ahmadiyyas declared their wish to be included with all non-Muslims in demarcating the boundaries, though in all cases also, their populations would be divided. The spokesmen for the Ahmadiyyas chose to identify and join with the Muslims and with Pakistan.

Yet, all these groups are socially and religiously marginal to both the Muslim and Hindu religious communities. They are all also in one way or another discriminated against, despised, and rejected by orthodox Muslims and caste Hindus (that is, all those not classed as low castes/'untouchables'/Harijans/Scheduled Castes). Persons from all these groups also either consider themselves entirely separate from Muslims or Hindus, or have a very low degree of identification with either. Yet, both sides, particularly the 'secular' India side, wanted their numbers to be counted on their side. In some cases, the persons who spoke on behalf of these groups before the Boundary Commission were not even members of the groups on whose behalf they claimed to speak. In other cases, it is obvious that they were show boys speaking for the Indian National Congress or the Muslim League rather than for their own group.

Further, for the Sikh spokesmen, who counted the low caste Mazhabis—a marginal group between Sikhs and Hindus, in fact—as part of their own total, all other marginal persons not included within the Sikh community were considered non-persons. This became clear in the testimony given by Sardar Harnam Singh before the Punjab Boundary Commission on behalf of the claim for the Sikhs to demarcate the central Punjab districts as a Sikh 'homeland', even though Muslims were in a substantial majority therein. Their argument was that, in these districts, only the Sikhs were the true 'sons of the soil,' that is, peasant proprietors—or, at least, occupancy tenants, 'rooted in the soil of the districts.' Never mind that they

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themselves or their parents or grandparents had come from other districts and had, in many cases, been given lands to cultivate with irrigation. Most of the Muslims, it was argued, were a population of 'fakirs, beggars, weavers, herdsmen, cobblers, *kumhars* or potters, *musallis* [rat catchers], carpenters, oilmen, bards, barbers, blacksmiths, washermen, butchers and *mirasis* [singers and dancers], people who are described in the settlement reports [British reports on the settlement of the land revenue of a district] as landless people and menials.'[60] Many of these people had 'come from abroad [meaning other districts] for labour, for work and they may work and go away when they find things unsuitable for them.'[61] They were 'birds of passage', not, like the Sikh landholders 'the trees and plants of this soil.' These persons, it was argued, should not be counted in the total Muslim population. In other words, they were non-persons. Leaving out these non-persons, the Muslims in the districts whose census population in 1941 constituted a majority in all of them, would be reduced to a minority.

On the other hand, if these persons were to be counted rather than discounted, the Sikhs could still be granted the central districts as their 'homeland' through an exchange of population. In other words, the non-persons among the Muslims in these districts could be exchanged with the Scheduled Caste non-persons from the western Punjab districts for the sake of preserving the claimed Sikh homeland. For a parallel to this shameless argument, one needs to go back to the Constitution of the United States in 1789 where the Southern states were allowed to count their slaves as part of their total population for purposes of representation in the Congress,[62] but these Negro slaves were, of course, not to be allowed to vote. In the Sikh claim, such non-persons of the other community were not to be counted at all or were to be traded for others from the other side to perform the same menial tasks on their behalf. Since the Muslims would not accede to this 'reasonable' demand of the Sikhs for their own homeland, the only alternative became what Sardar Harnam Singh had declaimed as 'unthinkable,' namely the movement of the Sikh sons of the soil themselves to the eastern Punjab districts and the forced expulsion of not just the Muslim menials from those districts, but every last man, woman, and child.

At the same time, it appears from limited evidence that persons from some of these marginal groups escaped the violence among the three main warring groups of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. One case discovered by Butalia is especially revealing in this regard and adds the only touch of humour and lightness that I have found in all that has been written about the horrors of partition. It is the case of some young girls from the Scheduled Castes who were ignored in the attack by Muslims upon Hindus in a village in West Punjab. During the days of fighting and after the Hindus had been expelled, these young girls went about the vacated houses and collected what was for them a vast amount of loot that filled an entire room: food, cooking utensils, items of clothing, and other everyday things that they would normally either not have at all or have only meagrely. In short, they had a wonderful time in the midst of the bloodshed.

Further, it is obvious that Butalia sympathizes with these young girls—who were old women when she interviewed them—and does not condemn their actions. Neither do the women themselves have an ounce of regret for what they did then. It is likely that most readers will feel the same way, as I myself did when I read their account.

Feelings and sentiments apart, the central point here is that the actions of these girls mock the very categories that were created by Indian nationalists and Muslim separatists to define their new nations and to justify the violence they brought down upon their peoples. But, India and Pakistan are hardly unique examples of the mockery of categorical designation of peoples as a basis for the creation and consolidation of states. Indeed, if there is a place in which advocates of human rights should stand in this new century, it is rigorously against every leader and every group of people—political, ethnic, religious, and whatever—that claims exclusive rights to territory on behalf of an entire category of people.

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Notes

1. Allen D. Grimshaw, 'Genocide and Democide', in *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict*, vol. 2 (San Diego: Academic Press, 1999), p. 58.
2. Many examples of this point of view could be cited. Among the most clearly articulated is Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India's Muslims Since Independence* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997); see especially pp. 55–6.
3. Among the very few worthwhile books available in 1999 when the research for this study was done is the superb account of Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit: An Eyewitness Account of the Partition of India*, new edn. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998). Other useful accounts include the highly biased work of Gopal Das Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading Up To and Following the Partition of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989, originally published in 1949); Robert S. Corruccini and Samvit Kaul, *Halla: Demographic Consequences of the Partition of the Punjab, 1947* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), and Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905–1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991). There is also a fictionalized account in the stories of Saadat Hassan Manto, *Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and Stories of Partition* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1997). For a useful survey of fictionalized accounts of the partition and its consequences, see Ian Talbot, 'Literature and the Human Drama of the 1947 Partition', *South Asia*, 8, Special Issue (1995), 37–56. See also Ian Talbot, *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), which contains a rare discussion in Chapter 5, including autobiographical accounts of refugees from East Punjab, of the massacres that occurred as they fled to Pakistan. The absence until very recently—and even now the very meagre presence—of serious research on what happened during the partition is regrettable also from another point of view. It has meant that the partition exists as a disastrous [for the Indian side] disjuncture in the arrival of the Indian state on the world scene and, on the Pakistan side, as a regrettable but necessary catastrophe that made possible the creation of the Pakistan state. But the sharpness and horrific character of the partition has made it appear as a kind of terrible accident that cannot be fitted into the perceptions of the people of India and Pakistan concerning their past and future. Historians have at the same time failed to provide a narrative of the history of these two new states into which the partition can be fit. On these points, see Gyanendra Pandey, 'In Defence of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu–Muslim Riots in India Today,' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26, Nos. 11 & 12 (Mar. 1991), 559–72 and David Gilmartin, 'Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57, No. 4, (Nov. 1998), 1068–95.

   There has been a considerable expansion of writing on partition since the research for this Chapter was done. Notable works include Ravinder Kaur, 'Narratives of Resettlement: Past, Present and Politics among 1947 Punjabi Migrants in Delhi', Ph.D. thesis, Department of International Studies, Roskilde University Centre, Denmark, 2004; Ian Talbot and Darshan Singh Tatla, *Epicentre of Violence: Partition Voices and Memories from Amritsar* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006); and the collection of articles titled 'Partition: Many Meanings,' in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (3 June 2006).

4. In the latter category, there is one outstanding work by Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Viking Penguin, 1998). Also noteworthy is Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998).
5. Das, *Communal Riots*, has looked at the Bengal records. Ayesha Jalal has made use of the Lahore records in 'Nation, Reason [sic] and Religion: Punjab's Role in the Partition of India,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33, No. 32 (8 Aug. 1998), 2,183–90; however, at least one Western scholar was denied access to these records and told by a responsible authority in Lahore that they did not exist: personal communication. Swarna Aiyar has made excellent use of the railway police and other civilian and military intelligence records in the India Office Library; see her 'August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947,' *South Asia*, vol. 28, Special Issue (1995), 13–36.
6. For example, Corruccini and Kaul, *Halla*, p. 37, who estimate a maximum of 400,000 deaths, but with an enormous margin of error, namely, plus or minus 100,000.
7. 'The communal venom that had seeped into the minds of all the communities, got expression in large-scale arson, murder of innocent men, women and children, looting, forcible conversions and abduction of women. These events left no doubt in the minds of the people that the establishment of a separate Muslim State was the only alternative.' Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab: A Study of Its Effects on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab (I) 1947–56* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 47.
8. For these reasons, Khosla argues, 'It was . . . in Calcutta, and Calcutta alone, that so much violence and hooliganism were displayed on Direct Action Day': Gopal Das Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 49.
9. Kirpal Singh, 'Introduction,' in Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, . . .* (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1991), p. xxi.
10. Tan Tai Yong has argued that the Sikhs and their principal political leaders and organizations, notably the Akali Dal and Master Tara Singh, followed a consistent line of opposition to the Pakistan demand up to this point and only now resigned themselves to the inevitable. His account suggests continuity in the Sikh political position designed to protect their position and their bargaining power in the midst of a rapidly changing political context. Yet, even Yong remarks that, by accepting the partition of India and the Punjab, the Sikhs had 'painted themselves into a corner'; 'Prelude to Partition: Sikh Responses to the Demand for Pakistan, 1940–47', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, vol. 1/2 (Jul.–Dec., 1994), 167–96, citation from p. 190. Yong's argument is an extension of an earlier analysis that he cites by Indu Banga, 'The Crisis of Sikh Politics (1940–7),' in Joseph T. O'Connell, Milton Israel, and Willard G. Oxtoby (eds.), *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1988), pp. 233–55.
11. Yong, 'Prelude to Partition', argues forcefully and more clearly than most who have written on the subject that the Sikh role in the violence associated with the

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partition of the Punjab was central. He opens his article with the statement that, 'the Sikhs, enraged that the Punjab would be partitioned and half of it given to the newly created state of Pakistan, reacted with unbridled fury and plunged the province into a state of carnage and destruction.' He argues further that this destruction was planned, organized, and coordinated by the Sikh leaders and concludes by saying that 'the Sikhs took the final initiative that was to result in the communal violence of 1947'; citation from pp. 167 and 191.

12. On the workings of the boundary commission, see especially Tan Tai Young, '"Sir Cyril Goes to India": Partition, Boundary-Making and Disruptions in the Punjab', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, vol. 4/1 (Jan.–June 1997), 1–20.
13. Nor were Sikh leaders at all subtle in declaring their aims in advance. For example, Mountbatten wrote in his personal report dated 18 Jul. 1947 that 'the Sikhs have warned Jenkins through Giani Kartar Singh that they will have to take violent action if they are not satisfied by the Boundary Commission's award. They said openly that they proposed to sabotage communications, canal systems, headworks, etc.' As will be shown below, they also openly declared that massacres of Muslims would be required to force the Muslims out of East Punjab to facilitate exchange of population. In fact, there was not much damage to communications, canal systems, and headworks during the partition violence; they were much better protected than the population. For the best, indeed the only, serious scholarly analysis of the organized Sikh attacks during the partition massacres in Punjab, see Aiyar, 'August Anarchy'. Moon put the matter bluntly a few years later: 'The determination of the Sikhs to preserve their cohesion was the root cause of the violent exchange of population which took place.' Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 280.
14. Paul R. Brass, 'Introduction: Discourses of Ethnicity, Communalism, and Violence', in Paul R. Brass (ed.), *Riots and Pogroms* (New York: New York University, 1996), and *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1997).
15. Jalal, 'Nation, Reason [sic] and Religion', p. 2188.
16. From document #12: 31 May 1947 (Jenkins to Mountbatten), in Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), *The Transfer of Power, 1942–7*, vol. XI: *The Mountbatten Viceroyalty: Announcement and Reception of the 3 June Plan, 31 May–July 1947* (London: HMSO, 1982), [Hereafter Mansergh, XI], pp. 23–7. It is curious that, in these last mentioned raids, Jenkins does not specify whether or not the raiders were Hindus, Sikhs, or both.
17. Footnote reference to 'a situation report' by Jenkins on his visit to Gurgaon in #16, Mountbatten to Liaquat Ali Khan, 1 June 1947, in Mansergh, XI, p. 31.
18. Document #292, 30 Jul. 1947 (Jenkins to Mountbatten) in Mansergh, XII, pp. 425–7.
19. Document #306, 1 Aug. 1947 (Telephone message from Mr Abbott) in Mansergh, XII, p. 459.
20. A rare and exemplary piece of research has been done on the violence between Meos and Hindus by Shail Mayaram, *Resisting Regimes: Myth, Memory and the Shaping of a Muslim Identity* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), in which the author presents strong evidence that what occurred in the princely states of

Alwar and Bharatpur and in the adjacent Punjab district of Gurgaon, where the Meos were widely distributed, was nothing less than genocide against the Meos. Further details on the roles of the princely states in general in the genocide are in Ian Copland, *State, Community and Neighbourhood in Princely North India, c.1900–1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1995), esp. Chapter IV.

21. Document #337: 4 Aug. 1947 (Jenkins to Mountbatten; Enclosure [Memorandum], in Mansergh, XII, p. 516.
22. Document #382: 8 Aug. 1947 (Jenkins to Mountbatten) in Mansergh, XII, pp. 583–4.
23. Document #432: 11 Aug. 1947 (Note by Major General D.C. Hawthorn), in Mansergh, XII, p. 667.
24. Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849–1947* (Riverdale, Md.: The Riverdale Company, 1988), p. 228. Aiyar also notes the extensive involvement of former Indian National Army men (Indian soldiers in the British army in the Second World War, captured by the Japanese, who formed a deserter army to fight against the British), and even of 'regular Indian Army officers on leave'; 'August Anarchy', p. 32.
25. Talbot, *Punjab*, p. 233.
26. See also Aiyar, 'August Anarchy', pp. 28–30 and 34.
27. Document #403, 9 Aug. 1947, Jenkins to Mountbatten, Mansergh, XII, p. 636. However, Captain Savage had reported in an interview with Mountbatten, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, and Sardar Patel four days earlier that he had been informed that Master Tara Singh himself had told his fellows that there was a plan to blow up a train, called 'the Pakistan Special with remote control firing apparatus and after wrecking the Special, set it on fire, and shoot the occupants.' Tara Singh's plans or knowledge of them also included one to assassinate Jinnah; document #345: 5 Aug. 1947 (Record of interview between Mountbatten, Jinnah, Liaquat, Patel, and Captain Savage), Mansergh, XII, p. 557. Two days later, a Pakistan special train did run over a mine and two persons were killed as a consequence of the explosion; (Document #418: 10 Aug. 1947 (Note by Major General D.C. Hawthorn) in Mansergh, XII, p. 648. This could, of course, have been a coincidence, but there can hardly be any doubt that Sikh groups did target trains moving to Pakistan with Muslim occupants, whom they also massacred when they could.
28. Document #224, 24 Jul. 1947 (Mountbatten to Listowel) in Mansergh, XII, p. 326.
29. Jenkins, as usual, was bluntly on the mark in a response to criticism from all sides (Congress, Muslim League, and Sikh), that he was not doing enough to stop the violence: 'The critics', he remarked, 'are themselves participants in the events which they profess to deplore.' Document #337: 4 Aug. 1947, (Jenkins to Mountbatten; Enclosure [Memorandum]), p. 512. He had earlier also expressed his scorn for press statements by political leaders against the violence, saying that the 'real remedy is active intervention by political leaders not by Press Statements but by contacts which they unquestionably possess with violent elements.' (Document #327, 24 June 1947, (Jenkins to Mountbatten), in Mansergh, XI, p. 606. Talbot also notes that Mountbatten could persuade the Muslim League and Congress members of his Interim Government to agree to call on 'the local community and political leaders to help restore order', only with great difficulty for they did

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not like the implication 'that their supporters were at least partially responsible for the violence'; Talbot, *Punjab*, p. 229.

30. Talbot, *Punjab*, p. 234. Talbot gives no date for this statement, but implies that such appeals made by Sikh leaders were ineffective.
31. Document #432: 11 Aug. 1947 (Note by Major General D.C. Hawthorn), in Mansergh, XII, p. 667.
32. Village and site-wise figures for the West Punjab districts may be found in Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, pp. 320–49; this biased volume provides no figures for the East Punjab districts, though the author was an Indian civil servant and should have had easier access to Indian records and reports. Instead, his book focuses mostly and his statistics entirely on the massacres perpetrated by Muslims in West Punjab upon Hindus and Sikhs.
33. For example, Talbot, *Punjab*, p. 225 remarks that the massacre of the Sikhs in West Punjab in March 1947 'set off a chain reaction of retaliatory killings'.
34. Punjab government figures released on 26 Jul. 1947 gave the figures of persons killed in Rawalpindi District as 2,263 non-Muslims and 38 Muslims; Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 112.
35. Document #67: 11 Jul. 1947 (Record of Interview between Jenkins and Jathedar Mohan Singh and Sardar Harnam Singh), in Mansergh, XII, p. 103.
36. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 112.
37. Document #306: 1 Aug. 1947 (Telephone message from Mr Abbott), in Mansergh, XII, p. 459.
38. Document #337: 4 Aug. 1947, (Jenkins to Mountbatten; Enclosure [Memorandum], in Mansergh, XII, p. 516.
39. Sumanta Banerjee, 'The Partition and Its Survivors'; review of *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* by Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Viking Penguin India, 1998), *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38, No. 39 (26 Sept. 1998), p. 2,518.
40. Banerjee, 'The Partition and Its Survivors,' pp. 2,518.
41. Corruccini and Kaul, *Halla*, p. 62, (Survivor Account #2).
42. Banerjee, 'The Partition and Its Survivors', p. 2,520.
43. Though one should never forget that what appears gruesome to most people is titillating to some, probably a not insignificant proportion of any populace.
44. Many such accounts may be found in Corruccini, Khosla, and Butalia.
45. As Bhalla puts it, '. . . there was violence of such fiendishness that each reminder of it still comes as a shock to our decencies and still violates our sense of a common humanity'; Alok Bhalla, 'Memory, History and Fictional Representations of the Partition,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34/44, (30 Oct.–5 Nov. 1999), p. 3,120. My point is that there is no such thing as 'a common humanity'. Belief in it, however noble and inspiring, is misguided.
46. Aiyar has noted that 'at no time [before, during, and after the massacres], was there a complete collapse of either the colonial state or the successor states'; 'August Anarchy', p. 35.
47. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, pp. 161–2.
48. Corruccini and Kaul, *Halla*, p. 63, (Account #3).

49. Document #11, 31 May 1947, (Liaquat Ali Khan to Mountbatten), in Mansergh, XII, pp. 20–2.
50. Das, *Communal Riots*, p. 161; this author later mixes the metaphor and refers to the 'wave of communal violence' in several Bengal districts that followed the August 1946 Calcutta riot as 'partly . . . a chain reaction'; p. 189.
51. Jalal, 'Nation, Reason [sic] and Religion', pp. 2, 187–8.
52. Jalal, 'Nation, Reason [sic] and Religion', p. 2, 188.
53. Jalal, 'Nation, Reason [sic] and Religion', p. 2, 190.
54. A general account is provided in Andrew Major, '"The Chief Sufferers": Abduction of Women during the Partition of the Punjab', *South Asia*, vol. 18, Special Issue, (1995), 57–72.
55. Jalal makes a similar point: 'All said and done, the commonality of masculinity was stronger than the bond of religion. Men of all three communities delighted in their momentary sense of power over vulnerable women. . . . Gender eroded the barriers that religion had been forced to create. . . . Alas, Punjab had betrayed its patriarchical [sic] bent more decisively than the affective affinities of religious community.' 'Nation, Reason [sic] and Religion', p. 2,190.
56. It is possible that many men did not seek the return of abducted women, though it is equally unlikely that we will ever know what proportion of families whose wives or daughters were abducted asked or did not ask to have them recovered. Jalal remarks that 'some women must undoubtedly have been abducted' in the Bihar massacres of 1946, but she imagines that 'almost all of them were recovered, there were hardly any conversions and when, after the return of peace, an announcement was made inviting the Muslims to give names of abducted women, no names were mentioned'; Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 84. That no names were given does not prove there were no abductions. The film, 'Silent Waters', suggests yet a further dimension of the suffering of these abducted women, depicting the search of a young Sikh man for his mother, living in Pakistan, having borne from her Muslim husband another son, who becomes a fiery Islamic fundamentalist. The film ends with the mother adopting the same solution as so many women did at the time of Partition itself, namely, suicide by jumping into a well.
57. Banerjee, 'The Partition and Its Survivors', p. 2,519; Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 196.
58. For Bengal, see Das, *Communal Riots*, pp. 179, 196–8.
59. Scheduled Castes is the official term in India for those castes of low status formerly called 'untouchables'.
60. 'Arguments of the Sikhs', presented by Sardar Harnam Singh, in Mian Muhammad Sadullah, et al. (eds.), *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, vol. II (Lahore: National Documentation Centre, 1983), p. 125.
61. 'Arguments of the Sikhs', p. 130.
62. Article 1, section two allowed the states to count three-fifths of their slave population as part of their population base for determining their quantum of representation in the House of Representatives.

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3

The Patterns of Partition Violence in West Punjab: A Study of Police Records

Ilyas Chattha

Despite the recent advances in historical understanding regarding partition-related violence in the Punjab province, especially in terms of its organization, the localized acts of violence and the identity of the perpetrators is usually hazy. This chapter attempts to understand the significance of the 1947 'communal' violence in relation to its spontaneity and organizational character through previously unused Police First Information Reports (FIRs) that were lodged at local police stations at the time. Use is also made of other fresh source material, including the reports of Punjab special branch police, to further provide an evidential base and illustration for the discussion. Alongside the struggle over territory and the cry for revenge, the chapter provides some novel evidences in which the desire for looting presented a major contributory factor in the attacks on Sikh and Hindu minorities. It not only highlights the chief characteristics of violence, and draws attention to the actual principal perpetrators of violence in West Punjab, but also adds considerable evidential weight to the argument that partition violence cannot simply be dismissed as 'temporary madness' or aberration. Particular attention is paid to the involvement of members of law enforcement forces in orchestrating the violence. In addition, the chapter attempts to understand the position of those culprits, who were apprehended on the charges of killings, looting, and incendiarism at partition.

The partition of the Indian subcontinent in August 1947 to create the two sovereign states of India and Pakistan displaced around twenty million people and led to an estimated two million deaths.[1] The 'epicentre of violence' was the Punjab province which led to an unprecedented mass displacement of more than ten million Punjabis alone at the time of the division of Punjab.[2] For a long time the historiography of partition was dominated by accounts of the high-level decision-making in the 1940s. Contemporary explanations of the violence, both in India and Pakistan, always portrayed the killings as erratic and spontaneous, many with the aim of 'blame displacement'.[3] With the fiftieth anniversary of independence in 1997, literature dealing with partition became noticeably more sensitive to its human aftermath for ordinary people.[4] This new emphasis reflects the reality articulated by Gyanendra Pandey that for ordinary people, partition was experienced as suffering and violence, although this has largely remained unacknowledged in official histories.[5] Partition's violence has only recently been considered in terms of general theories.[6] Paul Brass terms partition violence as 'retributive genocide'. He considers 'the genocidal massacres' in the Punjab to have been organized and planned, but their 'special character is that they were not ordered by a state'.[7] Donald Horowitz sees partition violence as evidence of the 'spontaneous quality of riot behaviour', though with respect to attacks on refugee trains, he acknowledges that they possess features of organized genocide. He also points out that social justification and approval motivates violence.[8] In contrast to this, Anders Bjorn Hansen has argued partition violence shows that the state need not be the only actor in a 'genocidal situation'. He suggests that the genocidal violence can also occur when the state is either unwilling or incapable of countering the violence, while the actual power is usurped by various communal groups. Instead of focusing on state involvement per se, the attention should be on processes leading to the genocidal situation.[9]

In recent years, several scholars have pointed out that there were a host of culpable individuals and group actors involved, ranging from religious extremists on both sides to unscrupulous politicians, officials, policemen, and soldiers. Swarna Aiyar makes it clear that in many cases the aggressors operated in organized groups under

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'military style' leadership. Her work considers the role played by the demobilized soldiers in determining the nature and brutality of the violence.[10] Ian Talbot has pointed out that British authority in the Punjab was declining from March onward and violence in the major cities of Lahore and Amritsar began as early as the beginning of that month. He sees this episode of violence as being completely different in character from that of the 'traditional' communal riot in the Punjab and links it with that of the partition period: '[the] August violence was not a sudden eruption but the final throes of a sustained period of conflict'.[11]

The works of Ian Copland and Shail Mayaram make clear the involvement of some Punjabi princely states in the violence. Copland maintains that 'Muslims were not only butchered in East Punjab, but systematically expelled. We would now term this process 'ethnic cleansing.'[12] Mayaram's account of violence in Mewat on the contrary challenges the notions of political parties and their association with violence. Some Muslim Meos in the princely states of Bharatpur and Alwar had not even heard of M.A. Jinnah and the Muslim League, but they had been caught up in 'the state-sponsored campaign of *safaya*, epitomizing the ideology of cleansing'.[13] For some writers, such as Ian Talbot, similarities are being revealed between partition and post-Independence communal violence in India.[14] Paul Brass's concept of an 'institutionalized riot system' in post-independence Indian cities such as Aligarh and Meerut parallels characteristics of the 1947 violence in which, for example, the involvement of politicians, police, and gangs was widely reported.[15]

This exploration builds on other locality based studies to reveal that partition violence was variegated and complex with elements of both private motivations and politically inspired attempts at 'ethnic cleansing.' In some episodes there were elements of genocide involved. This understanding is rooted in the utilization of new source materials. These present their own methodological issues, but also open up possibilities for a more profound understanding of the partition violence than that found in most standardized accounts. It is to the nature of the new sources that we shall initially turn.

Police Records

This chapter focuses chiefly on the information found in the police FIRs which include information about the alleged perpetrators [*hamla aawar*] and their criminal activities, as well as information on other persons of importance to the incidents. These other persons could be the victims, the members of law enforcement forces, village headmen [*lambardars*], and eye-witnesses. Source material also included some statements from individual members of the police pickets and army troops that were deployed at the time in the 'disturbed' areas to maintain law and order situation. The chosen police stations consisted of four districts—Gujranwala, Sialkot, Lahore, and Sheikhupura—with a total of twenty police stations [*thanas*] and over 1,000 FIRs. All figures mentioned in this chapter are based on the information available in the police reports. They do not cover the entire spectrum of the 1947 incidents. This is especially true in relation to information about victimization and offending against Hindu and Sikh minorities at partition because they were less likely to record the cases.

FIRs were chiefly written in Urdu. They were all hand-written, sealed in coloured ink (usually blue). Most of them are on the verge of total disintegration due to the extremely bad conditions in which they are deposited. Many of the documents are simply in piles on the floor. Dust, insects and damp conditions have infected a considerable segment already. There are wormholes in many of the manuscripts. A team of the India Office Library and Records travelled the 'old district records in Pakistan' between 1986 and 1987 and described the conditions of the record room as 'If you try to grasp hold of one of the coloured bundles to see what it contains you will be assailed by clouds of gritty dust that catch at your eyes and throat and may even force you to retire quickly from that dark and inhospitable place.'[16] This truly reflects the condition of the Thana Record Room.

In all, the *thana* records were divided into the twenty-five different '*Kitabchay*' [registers]. The FIRs that provided information about the alleged culprits and their committed crime activities were considered as '*Dimey Kitabchay*' [eternal record], and thus were archived in the 'Thana Record Room'. Other important *Kitabchay* included: (i) Daily

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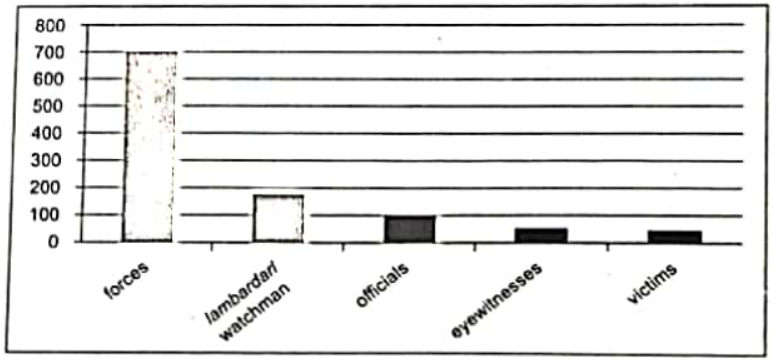
Diary that contained day-to-day criminal activities in a *thana* radius. An arrest could not be made on the basis of these reports as contrasted to the FIRs; (ii) Pro-Claim Offenders which contained the bio-data of criminals and absconders; (iii) Register No 9, which consisted of four parts; its part one provided the geographic and demographic profile of a *thana* area, as well as the caste and occupation of the inhabitants; part two provided village/locality-wise patterns of crime, numbers of criminals, and their alleged criminal activities; the third part provided the bio-data of those local criminals who committed a crime out of the radius of a *thana*; and its fourth part provided the details of those 'outsider' criminals who committed a crime in a *thana* area; (iv) Index History Sheet and List of Badmashs contained the list of 'notorious' *badmashs* [criminals] and their crime numbers and ranks with Nos. 10, 9, being regarded as the 'most wanted'; (v) The Explosive Stuff register contained histories and bio-data of those persons who manufactured explosive things such as fireworks; (vi) SHO Book was perhaps one of the most reliable registers in a *thana* record room; it was a 'secret register' and other *thana* staff had no access to this as this was passed on from one SHO to the other at their time of transfer; it contained not only the SHO's comments about the characters/credentials of *thana* staff, but it also contained the record of influential criminals and their local powerful patrons, which provided them with immunity from arrest or from charges being made against them.

It is immediately apparent that this rich range of records provides possibilities for understanding the linkage between criminals and partition violence and for possibly mapping traditionally high crime rate areas with the 1947 massacres. These areas for research have only been hinted at before. Historians have, however, been frustrated in the use of such records because of their inaccessibility. In many cases, only one *muharar* [reader] at the police station was aware of the way in which FIRs were kept and retrieved.

When they can be tracked down and accessed, the records themselves present methodological problems. Many reports did not explain the incidents, but just simply assigned the required sections of the Indian Criminal Penal Code [IPC]. For example, one report dealing with the violence in Lahore simply read: 'Two unknown men

found dead in Krishan Nagar, near Saadi Park. . . . A case has been registered under Section 303 of criminal code.' Another report describes: 'some houses in Mughal Pura's Guru Gobindgarh have set alight and a case has been registered under Section 436 of Criminal Code against unknown people.' Different individuals were responsible for making the police record over the time period. Some reports were made immediately after an incident, while others were written up days later. Some reports included a range of statements from a number of officials, policemen, army-men, *chukedars* [watchmen], *lambardars*, and eye-witnesses. Other incidents were just those of the police themselves without any reference to the victims' views. Sometimes reports overtly exaggerated the amount of suffering of their co-religionists and the scale of criminal activities of the offenders, while at the same time they downplayed the scale of killings of the rival communities and destruction of their properties. For this reason, however, the true rate of Hindu and Sikh minorities' victimization was almost certainly higher than that which is revealed here in police reports. Silences and absences in the FIR records may thus be as important as their contents. Police records, therefore, are likely to provide a fairly conservative picture of the extent of the victimization of non-Muslims. The ratio of reported cases, by different individuals and the law enforcement forces, in the selected *thanas*, is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Ratio of Who Reported Cases



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The umbrella term *'hamla aawar'* [attackers] was used in the police FIRs to denote a broad spectrum of alleged groups, ranging from the various members of 'local' populations to habitual criminals who emerged as perpetrators, organizers, or accomplices of the violence and looting. Sometimes, the term 'Badmash' was used to describe the Sikh raiders during the encounter. The FIRs were full of essentialized terms such as 'Muslim Leaguer', 'Congress Mind', and 'Alaki Mind'. Despite the FIRs themselves pointing to the planning of violence through such telling phrases as *'woho Jan bojkar agg lagray thay'*, [they set alight purposely], *kuch lootmar karray thay, doshary agg lagray thay'* [some were looting, while others were involved in burning] episodes are conveniently reported as by implication spontaneous communal riots. Many registered cases in the FIRs were simply written: *'ya wakaya farkawarana fasad malom huta hay'* (this incident appears to be communal riot), *hamla aawar* (raiders), in many cases, were described *na malom afraad* (unknown/nameless people), and big gatherings were called *mushtail hujum* (furious and uncontrollable crowd). Despite these stereotypes, these materials are unique and provide opportunities for an in-depth awareness of the unfolding of the partition-related violence.

The Unfolding of Violence

The reported cases reveal that violent episodes in the Punjabi districts under review from March-August 1947 onwards ranged from petty trouble making to large scale murders. There is evidence of opportunistic violence and well planned attacks for the destruction of the properties of Hindu and Sikh minorities. The FIRs also provided some evidence of a privatized violence taking place in the context of the general political turmoil as old scores were paid off in the pretext of communal conflict.

The police records not only reveal the different patterns of partition-related violence, but also identify some of its perpetrators. Many registered cases, for example, from February to March 1947, were filed against a great number of the Muslim League activists and Muslim League National Guards (MLNG), who were involved in the street protests and agitating in order to topple the Khizr Tiwana led-

Unionist Coalition Ministry in the Punjab, in defiance of the provisions of the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance. As an early March FIR reads:

> A crowd of the Muslim League demonstrators marched into the city's Magistrate building, chanting the slogan: *Khizro Toddy Bacha Haay Haay,* (Khizr, a stooge of the British) *Ban Ka Ray Ga Pakistan; Lar Kay Lengey Pakistan* (Pakistan would be achieved at any cost) . . . the police arrested the crowd for violating the Public Safety Ordinance, a case has been registered against under twenty-two people, including two local members of the Muslim League, Mohammad Nawaz and Anwar, under Sections 143/144 and 148/149 of the Indian Penal Code, [which prohibited the assembly of five or more persons anywhere within the town].[17]

The resignation of the Khizr government early in March 1947 was the signal for widespread disorders which began in Lahore and Amritsar, but soon spread to many areas of the Rawalpindi division. Previous accounts of these disturbances have relied on newspaper accounts, the Governor's reports and the fact finding missions of the Congress and Mahasabha. The FIRs add a further local element to these sources. On 15 March 1947, for example, a clash in the locality of Krishan Nagar in the city of Lahore was averted by the police. A Muslim Sub-Inspector, who witnessed the incident, reported this as follows:

> Today, a Hindu of Krishan Nagar was stabbed to death by a Muslim of Rajgarh, near the Lal Butcher Khana. Afterwards, a big crowd of Muslims armed with spears attacked Krishan Nagar. Hindus and Sikhs of Krishan Nagar also came out from their shops and houses for the encounter. We shouted at them and some went back; some resisted. We opened some fire in the air. They dispersed. The big procession of Muslims continued to march towards Krishan Nagar, chanting slogans with the cries of their leaders: *Challo Krishan Nagar Nun, Bhun Thea, Pichhan na Hatto'* [Let's march together towards Krishan Nagar, annihilate them, never give up].[18]

This statement reveals the worsening of the communal situation in Lahore soon after the Rawalpindi killings. In the aftermath of the latter, Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab demanded the division of the province if India was divided. Communal sentiment continued to

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simmer throughout the spring of 1947. As time passed, the preparation for imminent communal battle accelerated. A number of episodes were reported involving incendiarism, stabbings, and the manufacture of home-made bombs. Sporadic ambushes and assaults on the minorities became one of the prime crimes of the day. On some occasions, police saved the life of the members of minority populations. Harbajan Singh, while riding his bicycle on his way back home from work, was stabbed in the neck near his house in Lahore's Ponch Road. 'Alongside my neighbour, two police constables were coming towards us when two Muslims attacked me on the afternoon of 3 April 1947 . . . they saved my life', Singh filed a FIR in the Thana Mozang against 'two nameless Muslims'.[19]

Although cases were registered, they were not followed up and the reality was that no one was ready to stand witness. It is now well established that the failure to prosecute individuals for the March-April violence in the Punjab paved the way for the much greater violence in August. FIRs reveal not only the deteriorating situation in Lahore, but also the fact that minority populations could initiate violence. While Muslims held the upper-hand, Sikhs were also preparing for attack, as is evidenced by the following report of the employer of Mushtaq Illahi to the Thana Mozang:

> Mushtaq Illahi, son of Fazal Illahi, used to work in my shop in the Mochi Gate [in inner Lahore]. Today, when he was coming back to his home on motor-bike and as he reached near Puli Nala near [Mozang], between 5–6 Sikhs tried to stop him . . . and when they failed they threw a bomb upon him . . . later he died'.[20]

The reports of members of the Sikh community's attacks on Muslims and the recovery of arms from their, and Hindu localities, houses, and factories appeared repeatedly in the files of police reports. For example, police reports list the following string of 'communal riot' crimes; a number of arms, including *kirpans*, spears, and *barchaes* were found in a factory in Mughal Pura; a Muslim was stabbed to death near Janazgha by a Sikh, and so on. Such isolated attacks continued up until their forced exodus in the later weeks of 1947. Sometimes, some Sikhs came out from their 'relief' camps to inflict their rivals. One such assault, on 27 August 1947, was reported by

Abdul Majeed, the Division Inspector General of the Central Investigation Department, in which some Sikhs from a Lahore relief camp were seen throwing a bomb into the city's session court building that caught fire.[21]

The Acts of Violence

The role of criminality, and especially of looting, is well attested in both comparative and case study literature on collective violence. Charles Tilly, for example, points out the prevalence of looting because collective violence provides an 'unprecedented opportunity' for such activity.[22] The 1990s 'violence in Yugoslavia and Rwanda was carried out chiefly by . . . non-ideological criminals and criminal-like elements', as John Mueller argues, 'to gain material benefits through illicit and lucrative activities. These individuals thus had a strong stake in perpetuating the war to maximize these gains'.[23] Criminality was an important contributory factor in the 1947 violence in the Punjab, yet it has received little serious academic attention with the notable exception of Ayesha Jalal who points out that the struggle over territory in the Punjab as a whole was mirrored at the local level in 'strategies to appropriate the property of neighbours'.[24] The collapse of the colonial state, in fact, created conditions ripe for lawlessness and opened up an environment conducive to opportunistic criminality. The motivation of loot in episodes of violence comes out clearly when one analyses the FIR reports. While there may be biases in the reporting, it is unlikely that loot would feature in any attempts at 'blame displacement' or to cover up community involvement. Therefore, the large numbers of cases reported as can be seen in Figure 2 below is reflective of what must have been a key element in the violence.

The prospect for enrichment by looting vastly escalated as the violence gained momentum. In August, over 50 cases of looting were reported in the radius of Thana Mozang alone. The rapid growth in reporting such incidents is displayed in Figure 3 below.

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Figure 2: Ratio of Reported Cases in the FIRs

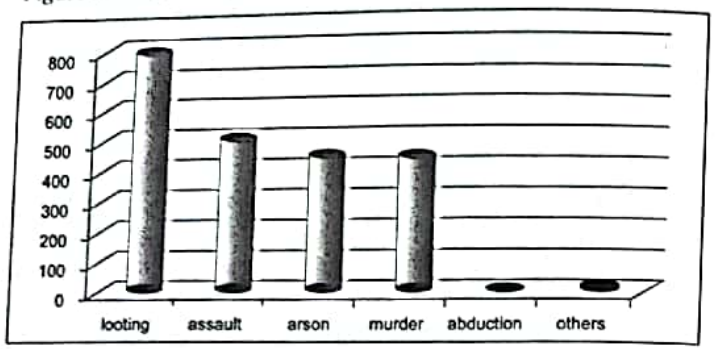
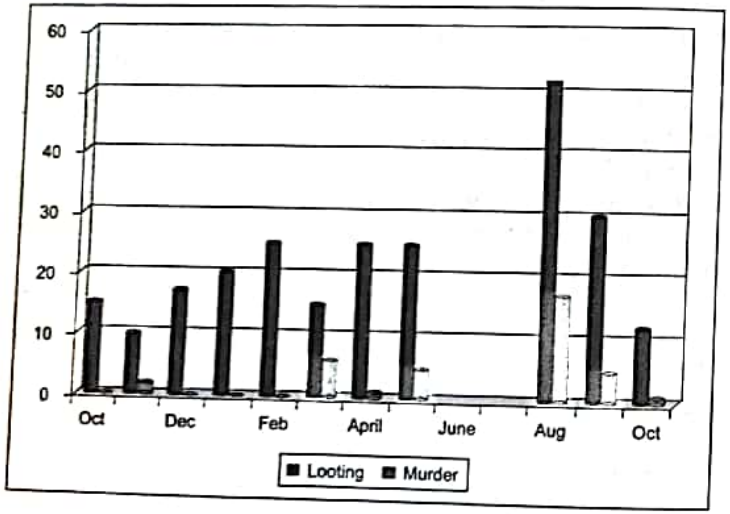


Figure 3: Reported Cases of Looting and Murder in Thana Mozang, from October 1946 to October 1947 [FIRs from June to July 1947 were unavailable]



The looted booty ranged from valuable ornaments and cash to merely a couple of pots and pans. Those who resisted were either killed, or murdered prior to looting. In one instance in Gujranwala a 'nameless' Muslim murdered an eighty-year-old Sikh couple while they were

sleeping on their rooftop, merely in order to loot their belongings in the house.[25] In another case, six lower-caste Mazhabi Sikhs were looted in the locality of Ramgarh in the city of Lahore, in which one Sikh's wife died when she refused to hand over her jewellery.[26] In a civil war, as Azam and Hoeffler assume, the most extreme forms of violence may be seen as by-products of looting and predation.[27] This is supported to some extent by reporting of the partition-related violence in Punjab. A great number of Pathans, for example, 'were out for loot, more on criminal than communal lines'. They were reported not only looting the houses of both Muslims and non-Muslims, but also opened fire on soldiers, wounding Lt. Col. Sher Afzal.[28] In one venture, some 'local' Muslims in a village, in Sialkot, burnt to death the *Lambardar* Khusi Mohammad Jat and his wife when the family tried to provide cross-community assistance for the safe evacuation of the Sikh Jats of the locality, and resisted the looting of their belongings. As a FIR describes: 'They attacked Bukha Wala [village] and demanded Kushi Mohammad to hand over the Sikhs and their belongings . . . otherwise, they would kill him as well . . . Kushi resisted . . . they locked Kushi and his wife up in a room and set them alight'.[29]

The FIRs interestingly reveal that looting occurred not only across community lines, but was perpetrated against members of one's own community. This reveals the element of privatization of violence albeit in a situation of communal breakdown which made such criminality possible. On 31 August, in Sialkot, for example, a police Sub-Inspector reported: '. . .a group of Muslims was found looting the property of all communities, including Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims'. In another case, two Muslim villagers told the Sialkot police: 'In spite of that we told them we are Muslims, not Sikhs, they looted us and snatched away our cattle'. A group of Hindus was reported looting the abandoned houses of Hindus and Sikhs in Lahore's Baghban Pura *mohalla* on 13 August 1947.[30] Another example included a case of looting jewellery worth about Rs 10,000 belonging to Chaudhry Hanraj Singh Jat and his brother by their close Sikh relative just a day before their departure from Sialkot for India on 24 August.

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Some attacks were carried out by 'outsiders', while others were by the 'locals'. Victims did sometimes know their assailants. A Hindu shopkeeper's wholesale shop in the city of Lahore's locality Bibi Paak Daaman was looted by some 'familiar faces'. Nathu Ram reported the incident to the Thana Civil Lines, by providing the following statement:

> I am Nathu Ram, son of Lakha, living in *Bibi* Paak Daaman area. One part of my house is consisted of shop. Today, between 10 and 12 Muslims attacked my shop. I ran away to rooftop and thus narrowly escaped. They looted my shop. . . . The looted items were included: Rs 550 net cash, 18 *pashmina* shawl, and 10 leather bags. . . . Total lost was over Rs 1,000. . . . I have been living in this *mohalla* for last 25 years. I know them and can identify their faces. . . .[31]

In another instance, some 'notable traders', named Ayub Ghani, Dr Noor Mohamad, Khar Baksh, M. A. Shamin and Mohammad Sadiq, were reported looting the shops of their Hindu counterparts in Lahore's Royal Park area.[32] In a few instances there were mass war-bands drawn from more local populations who were motivated by the desire for loot. In a Gujranwala village, Tata Chanwa, the lure of loot attracted a mob of over 2,500 Muslim villagers to attack a relatively small population of Hindus and Sikhs.[33]

Various organized armed groups and gangs arranged the attacks and drove out non-Muslims and looted their properties. As police records reveal, such groups or individuals chiefly belonged to the low-caste groups ['*kamies*'], as emerged from their given-caste names. Their chains of command were not always clear, and tended to be driven less by the political agendas of power struggle and more by material benefits. While they operated in limited bands or groups, their social support base was extended to the vast majority of the population. Taking advantage of the disturbed conditions, the local population mopped up after the raids, in expectation of loot and amassing property. They carried off what they thought was their share, and there was nothing to prevent them from taking advantage of the spoils of raids. 'Looting is not endemic or automatic in conflict situations', as Roger Ginty argues. 'Instead it requires the presence of enabling conditions'.[34] The absence of restraining authority,

impunity from the law, and permissible social expectance created enabling conditions for wholesale looting at partition. As S. Kalyvas argues civil war 'destroys social hierarchies that effectively act as social controls'[35] and that was much the situation in 1947 Punjab, where for many partition conflict was not a religious one but a moment of significant opportunity for pecuniary gain. Looting and violence were carried out with 'social approval', or 'social connivance', in the same way Paul Brass has pointed out that 'the communal situation made such looting inevitable and acceptable to nearly everyone except the victims'.[36]

The properties and businesses of wealthy Hindus and Sikhs in such West Punjab cities as Lahore were systematically looted. To transport the bulky looted booty, *tongas* (horse-carts) were arranged. Such activities have only previously been glimpsed in newspaper accounts, but are fully detailed in police records. The assistant sub-inspector of the Mozang Thana in Lahore provides the following eye witness account of the systematic looting of the properties of wealthy Hindus of Lahore's Bahawalpur Road.

> Today afternoon, some Muslims purposely burned the houses and shops of Hindus and Sikhs at Bahawalpur Road . . . they did this for the looting design. When a party of police reached there some people [Muslims] were loading the looted things in their *tongas*. . . .[37]

Habitual criminals contributed to the city's violence. Alongside their raids on Hindus and Sikhs for amassing resources, one criminal group was active in Lahore which assaulted a police van at Jail Road, that was transporting seven criminals under the supervision of a police picket. During the struggle, three criminals escaped, one died, and a constable was injured. The circumstances of partition transformed criminals into freedom fighters who by looting the local Hindu and Sikh population contributed to the 'ethnic cleansing' of Punjab's capital. The links between criminals and political leaders and the extent to which both had a symbiotic relationship in the perpetration of acts of violence could be the focus of a future study.

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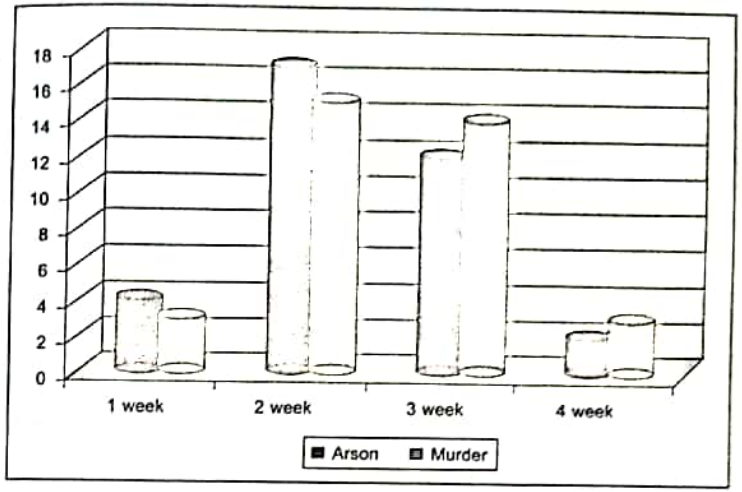
On the Organization of Violence

The attacks on the Hindus and Sikhs were thus clearly not the work of a few manic belligerents, but were frequently marked by cold-blooded organization and planning, although some scholars still try to maintain that it was a spontaneous 'vengeful retaliation' and 'summer madness'.[38] A key factor in the attacks on the minority populations was the involvement of 'organized groups', whether uniformed or volunteers. The motives were not merely for loot but to claim territory by driving out minority populations. This kind of activity would be later termed 'ethnic cleansing.' It was a feature throughout the Punjab and indeed was at its most brutal when directed against Muslim populations living in areas adjoining the Sikh ruled princely states. The process of driving out minorities had begun as early as March 1947 in the western Rawalpindi Division and was a feature of the endemic violence in Lahore from this date down to independence. Records from the Mozang Thana in Lahore reveal not only the extent of looting, but also the systematic use of arson in order to drive out the non-Muslim inhabitants. Existing studies reveal the importance of the burning of the Shah Almi area for the anticipatory flight of Hindus from Lahore. The FIR records for Mughalpura add a further dimension to the understanding of the role of incendiarism in the battle for Lahore which took place in the closing weeks of British rule and raged still further in August until the city had been completely demographically transformed. Between 10 and 16 August, over fifteen cases of arson were reported in the radius of Thana Mughal Pura alone—a no less than 400-fold increase over the previous week's reported cases (Figure 4).

'Selective violence against civilians', as Kalyvas argues, 'is a central form of civil war violence',[39] and that was clearly the situation during the 'August anarchy' in the Punjab in 1947. Houses and shops belonging to Hindus and Sikhs were selectively burned down, while the adjacent Muslim properties were left untouched. A police constable on duty in the Bhaghban Pura locality of the city of Lahore informed the Mughal Pura Police Station: 'A [Hindu] shop in Bhaghban Pura Street, which displays an English-written signboard "H.Q. Chawala" has been set ablaze while neighbouring [Muslim-owned] shops have been left unscathed'.[40] The marking of residences

Figure 4: Reported Cases of Arson and Murder in Thana Mughal Pura in August 1947



to safeguard them from attack had a history at least as far back as the August 1946 Great Calcutta Killing.[41] Further evidence of pre-meditated, rather than spontaneous violence, is seen in police accounts of actual episodes of arson in Lahore. The report below by a Muslim police sub-inspector does not deny the planned role of his co-religionists in the arson attack, although he concludes by falling back into the stereotypical explanation that this is the kind of behaviour to be expected in a 'communal riot'.

> When I reached there the *mohalla* of [Guru] Gobindgarh [a Sikh neighbourhood in Lahore's Mughal Pura area] was burning from all four sides. Already between 100 and 150 houses were completely burned down. Three men [who] seemed Muslims were still throwing kerosene on the buildings. Other two were engaged in torching . . . I tried to stop them but they continued to engage in their criminal activities. I fired on them and they ran away. . . . At the time flames had wrapped all over the *mohalla* and residents of the area had already quit their houses. . . . It appears to be a communal riot.[42]

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Another example of such reporting is the FIR account of the murder of M.G. Singh, the Registrar of the University of Punjab, Lahore. Despite the remarkable precision behind the attack, Thana Anarkali's sub-inspector reported the incident as a 'communal conflict'.[43] The assassin's intention had been widely known in the campus for weeks before the murder was committed, but the police had received no information about this and had seen no reason to provide protection. On the afternoon of 28 August 1947, when M.G. Singh was coming out of the campus hall, he was stabbed to death under the pretext of a communal conflict. A Thana Anarkali hawaldar reached the spot and reported the incident as follows:

> . . . M.G. Singh was badly bleeding when I reached there. It appeared he was stabbed many times. . . . He died before reaching to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. . . . He was a cruel victim of communal riot . . . ten eyewitnesses . . ., including a Sikh peon, Johar Singh, of the [Punjab] University and the Secretary of the Vice Chancellor, Mohammad Rahim, told me that the assassin is a man called Ismail, who stabbed the Registrar several times as he came out from the Hall . . . Johar Sikh told me that there was a rumour for weeks that [M.G.] Singh would be killed . . . Ismail was arrested yesterday and a case under Section 303 of Criminal Code has been registered against him.

Understandably, both the expulsion and killings of the minorities in the Punjab were made possible not only by a general breakdown of the local administration, but also by a common feeling of impunity to the punishment. Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, believed that in many ways the gangs carried out operations with impunity in the state's transitional environment under 'the general feeling that all cases will be dropped on 15th August. . . .'[44] Such attacks could occur because of the acquiescence of local police and officials. They were either genuinely helpless because of the scale of the disorder, or sympathized and connived with the attacks, and in some instances individual policemen even participated in them. It is to this little-studied and vexed issue we will turn now.

Role of the Law Enforcement Forces

The communalization of the Punjab police force was a prominent feature of partition violence. Instead of safeguarding minority communities under attack, they largely condoned and contributed to the violence, not because of sympathies with their co-religionists, but because they could act with impunity in an environment of insubordination and administrative breakdown. Ian Talbot has pointed out the partiality of the police towards Muslims in Amritsar was 'a major factor in the heavier casualties suffered by Hindus and Sikhs in the period up to the transfer of power'.[45] The police force in the Punjab was predominately staffed by Muslims, forming 'between 70 and 80 per cent' of the total force in the province.[46] Similarly, the district police force was in the main Muslim, pitifully small, and understandably riddled with communal frenzy. The average number of policemen employed in the Lahore Corporation area was 3000, equivalent to 3:1160 of the population.[47] The average number of policemen employed in Gujranwala was 600, equivalent to 1:1525 of the population. Sialkot possessed a total number of 750 policemen, equivalent to 1:1600 of the population.[48] This reflects the presence of the police force across the whole of Punjab. The governor, Evan Jenkins, reported both the inefficiency and unreliability of the police in the province, writing to Mountbatten on 13 August that the gangs were both 'well armed and well led' and the raiding was quite impossible to control 'without a very great display of massive force', and the police force seems 'to have ceased functioning'.[49] The situation was much worse at *thana*-level. Local level records reveal the under-manning and reluctance of police to intervene. 'There are not enough police constables in this Thana that could be sent there', a member of Thana Gujranwala replied to an appeal from a local *Lambardar* who reported over 500 people were looting a Sikh village for the last four hours. 'Riots are now at peak, force is scarce, and a few constables cannot control the mob . . . their own lives could be at danger . . . your appeal has been forwarded to the DSP [Deputy Superintendent Police]'.[50]

Another feature of the heightened anxiety was the demobilizing and disarming of police from the 'other' community. General Rees of

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the Punjab Boundary Force reported that a Hindu Superintendent of Police in Amritsar by the name of Kaul, had disarmed the Muslim members of the force, which had 'created considerable alarm and despondency'.[51] In Ambala, near Abdullapur, a Sikh sub-inspector, Parkash Singh, disarmed sixteen Muslim constables and their arms were handed over to Sikhs.[52] There were reports in the cities and towns of West Punjab that a number of Hindu and Sikh police officers and subordinates had 'deserted' as well.[53] Many patently sneaked away from the local police stations and took away the official weapons with them. In the later weeks of 1947, they joined militias in turning the tide of battle by using these weapons. A police hawaldar, Khar-ud-Din, telephoned the DSP from Thana Mozang, Lahore:

> . . . Constable Mohinder Singh, batch number 1805, was on duty today. With my permission, he went to the Mozang Bazaar to eat food this evening, but so far he did not return to the [police] station. . . . He was armed with a rifle and 50 cartridges . . . it is highly likely that he has run away [to India] . . . and has taken station's weapons with him. . . . A FIR under the Section 409 Penal Code 409 ['criminal breach of trust by public servant'] has been registered against him.

In the same message, the hawaldar further reminded his '*Sahib*' [sir] that this was not an exceptional case, '. . . in fact, earlier on 16–8–1947, a Head-Constable and a Sub-Inspector had disappeared from the *thana* . . . and gone to Amritsar. They had taken [the police] station's rifles with them. . . .'[54]

Some individual police constables 'headed' the attacks on non-Muslim localities and directly participated in 'large-scale murders and looting'. In a Gujranwala village, on 18 August 1947, Lieutenant Colonel P.C. Gupta, in-charge of 4th Battalion (Sikhs) of the Frontier Force Regiment in Gujranwala, apprehended a 'serving Police Constable in plain clothes' who was 'heading the mob' in attacking and looting the Hindus and Sikhs of the village Mamnanwali. 'No 739 Police Constable Bashir Ahmed, Gujranwala Police Lines . . .', Gupta wrote to the Inspector Sadar Police Station Gujranwala, by handing over the culprits, 'committed large scale killings and loot in village Mamnanwali. He had a 303 serving rifle and 50 cartridges in his possession'.[55] Clearly, this kind of behaviour was neither isolated nor

unique to Gujranwala, but was reported across the Punjab. The Joint Defence Council reported in mid-August that the police in Lahore 'joined mobs and carried out arson and murder'.[56] Source material drawn from the Sialkot police records reveal that the attacks on Hindus and Sikhs were encouraged by the involvement, coordination, and indecision of the local police. In some cases, police constables directly participated in violence and looting. A clear example of this is evidenced in an organized attack on the Hindus of a Sialkot village by two serving police constables of Thana Shakargarh, in which they pulled the non-Muslims out from their houses before looting and then selling their moveable properties to the local residents.[57]

Further evidence of police involvement and lack of impartiality could be found in their behaviour when they went to deal with scared and vulnerable minorities. In many instances, the police remained either conspicuously absent, or were slow in responding to the minority populations' appeals for assistance when attackers went on the rampage in their localities. In several cases, the local *thana* police was 'dispatched to assist' the majority population against the minority. The police of Thana Satra, Sialkot, went to 'assist' the local Muslims against the 'Sikh badmashs' of the village Jatol, and in the operation, with the assistance of the local Muslims on horseback, killed twelve Sikhs and brought their possessions to the police station. 'They tried to run away; we surrendered them on one side, and the locals [Muslims] who were on horsebacks surrendered them on the canal side . . . they [Sikhs] took sheltered in near sugar-cane fields . . . [Finally] they all were killed'. [58]

Undoubtedly, the police in West Punjab sided with the Muslims, just as the reverse happened in East Punjab and the Sikh princely states. The complicity and participation of local police was not just the product of the transitional state in 1947, but resulted from the embittered political situation. The use of the army became vital, in these circumstances, to suppress raiders and protect lives and properties of the communities under attack. On 1 August 1947, a special military command, the Punjab Boundary Force, was set up to maintain civil order in covering the 'disturbed' twelve districts of the Punjab—an area of 37,500 square miles, which as Rees pointed out, was somewhat larger than Ireland.[59] Its population was estimated over

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14.5 million people, distributed over 17,932 inhabited towns and villages.[60] The main elements of the population were Muslims, about 50 per cent, 25 per cent Sikhs, and 20 per cent Hindus. The PBF was composed of 35 per cent Muslim and 65 per cent non-Muslim; with an exception of Ayub Khan, future President of Pakistan, all the five Brigade Commands and Unit Commands were British and non-Muslim.[61] The force consisted of 25,000 troopers: an average of fewer than two men to a square mile. The average numbers of troopers employed in each district was 2084; equivalent to 1:2232 of the population of the districts of Sheikhupura, Gujranwala, Sialkot, and Lahore.[62] The works of Robin Jeffrey, and more recently, Daniel Marston, have highlighted the limitations of the force in containing the violence.[63]

In addition to a lack of troops, there are a number of instances of the partisan attitude of all of its contingents. Instead of safeguarding minority communities under attack, the PBF detachments either failed to intervene, or in some instances joined in the assaults. The participation of troopers led the violence to take on genocidal proportions as happened in Sheikhupura. The worst cases involved the units of the Baloch, Punjab, and Dogra troops, who were attached to the PBF. FIRs again provide unique insights into these episodes. Sadiq Ali, for example, a Muslim resident of Lahore's *mohalla* of Saadi Park, reported the involvement of a group of eight to ten Hindu troops of the Dogra Regiment firing at Muslim civilians in Ponch Road, killing one and wounding eleven.[64]

> Today about 8:00 am this morning a military jeep of the Hindu Dogra troops arrived at Ponch Road, where some houses of Hindus were burning. Immediately upon their arrival, Hindu Dogra troopers, who were between 8 and 10, opened fire upon the Muslims, killing one and wounded many. The troopers were purposely targeting the Muslims of the area. Please take appropriate action against them. The properties and lives of the Muslims of Saadi Park are in real danger.[65]

The situation was much the same in the border town of Sialkot, where the emphasis was on revenge. Hindu Dogra troops from the neighbouring Jammu and Kashmir princely state greatly contributed in orchestrating the violence as well as the making and expulsion of

refugee populations. As the police record reveals, they coordinated with the Dogra refugees, who went to take revenge on those individual Muslims who had earlier ejected them, and burned and looted their properties. For example, the ejected Sikh residents of Malkhanwala, with the help of Dogra troopers, raided the village on 4 September 1947, and targeted specifically those whom they intended to kill. A registered police report by the relatives of the deceased provides the following information about such 'targeted' killings.

> There is a Sikh refugee camp in a village called King, on the right side of upper Chenab River. The camp is under the security of Dogra military. Yesterday about 4:00 pm between 6–7 Sikhs along with 3 or 4 Dogra soldiers came in Malkhanwala. First, they killed a Muslim Kashmiri, who was working in a garden and then they searched for Ghulam Sial, son of Noor Sial, and found him nearby the graveyard and killed him. Afterwards they moved to Parozwala and killed Wali Mohammad and Noor Mohammad . . . The local people can recognize the Sikhs because they are the former residents of Malkhanwala.[66]

Standard accounts rarely reveal the 'personal element' in partition violence. The seeking out of victims in order to exact revenge of course gives the lie to explanations which stress the 'spontaneity' of the episodes of violence or attributes them to aberrational moments of madness. Another previously unreported episode of violence appears in the rich resources of the Thana Mughal Pura Lahore archive. It reveals again violence being perpetrated by members of the PBF. Sikh members of the 2nd Sikh Regiment were reported as shooting indiscriminately on Muslim civilians and a police picket in the Mughal Pura locality of Lahore, in which two civilians and one constable died.[67]

> Today, I was the in-charge of a police party that was deployed in Mughal Pura [Lahore]. I had already spread the constables in different places . . . All of sudden we heard sound of firing. We saw five Sikh army-men were openly firing on the Muslims. When I reached on the spot they had already shot to death a policeman. . . . I concealed myself a nearby wall. They [Sikh army] possessed Tommy guns and rifles. They were firing on the rooftop of Amarnath's house . . . some soldiers were taking positions in

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> the Gurdwara. Two [Muslims] had already been killed and another was badly bleeding. . . . I thought it would be difficult to encounter the Sikh army-men and thus I sent a constable to inform at the headquarters and . . . to bring more police force from the station.[68]

Similarly, there are a great number of instances revealed in the FIRs of the partisan attitude of Muslim members of the battalions of 3rd and 10th Baloch Regiments, which were attached to the PBF, towards the Hindu and Sikh minorities during the 1947 violence in the Punjab. The following report by a sub-inspector police Lahore not only clearly signals the communalization of the 10th Baloch Regiment, but also suggests how the force was directing the police to advance:

> On 12 August afternoon, the Balochi Regiment informed at the police headquarters. . . . Sikhs had attacked on the Muslim *mohalla* of Nabipura [in Lahore] and immediately a team of police should be despatched over there to protect the Muslims. . . . Because the troopers [Baloch Regiment] have deployed in another place for the safety of Muslims. . . .[69]

In addition to the partiality, there were a number of compelling evidences of the direct involvement of the Muslim troopers of Baloch Regiment in partition violence. This took on a 'genocidal character' in the unjustifiable killings of the defenceless Sikh refugee populations in the Ramgarh locality of the city of Sheikhupura as is depicted elsewhere in this volume. The violence against minorities in the Punjab undoubtedly involved heavy participation of army troops, veterans, paramilitary organizations, and the local police. Far from a spontaneous eruption, the basic elements of the Punjab violence process had been planned for months before the drawing of actual boundary lines. A great number of former soldiers, who had war-time military experiences, provided 'advice' and 'training' on military tactics and organizations to the volunteer 'groups' in their pursuit of the ethnic cleansing of rival communities during the 1947 conflict. Some Gurkha veterans sought employment 'to train the volunteers' of the Hindu Scouts Volunteer Corps (HSVC) and the RSS in Lyallpur.[70] Former members of the INA were not only employed as 'advisors', by the various paramilitary units, and recruited in the

police force, but were also 'involved in leadership of the gang in East Punjab'.[71] The participation of a great number of 'combat veterans' led the apparent communal conflict to the 'ethnic cleansing' situation.[72] There is also evidence of the involvement, or complicity, of the leaders of various princely states in orchestrating the violence.[73] Like other large-scale episodes of collective violence in the twentieth century, partition violence in Punjab bears the characteristics of what would now be termed 'ethnic cleansing' of minority populations of a region in terms of making claims for 'territory'.

Arrests and Prosecutions

The police records also provide some insights into the arrest of perpetrators of violence. In many instances however no action was taken against these individuals. As pointed out earlier, in a village in Gujranwala, Colonel Gupta apprehended ten leading people, including two police constables, who perpetrated an attack on the non-Muslim village, and handed over the culprits to the Gujranwala Sadar Police Station. Members of the Gurkha troopers arrested twelve Muslim 'raiders' in Sialkot, who were involved in the destruction and looting of Hindu and Sikh properties. Two serving police constables were arrested in Jhang, six in Mianwali, and two in Sialkot. One 'Town Salar' [President of MLNG] of Jhang city was arrested on the charge of looting, and another was arrested on the charge of arson in Pind Dadan Khan. An inquiry was initiated into some leading members of the 3rd Baloch Regiment who were involved in firing on the Hindu and Sikh refugees in the Ramgarh locality of Sheikhupura city. About fifty Muslim refugees, upon their arrival in Sialkot, were arrested on the charge of abduction of non-Muslim women. Over one hundred people were named and nineteen were arrested in the Hari Nagar locality in the city of Lahore, who were involved in the attacks on Hindus and Sikhs, as is evidenced clearly from the following report of Captain Nishan Singh of 9/10th Punjab Regiment to the sub-inspector, Thana Mughal Pura on 14 August 1947:

> Today, I with 10 RC [?] went to Hari Nagar [a Hindu locality on the outskirt of Lahore] which was set ablaze. I foun[d] three Hindu dead and

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one wounded in Hari Nagar. I searched the village . . . [After seeing the soldiers], some people started running, we caught them. . . . Again four men were found running. They were asked to stop, but they did not stop . . . [These four] men orchestrated the attack on Hari Naghar. We opened two rounds of fires upon them, no one was killed . . . 19 Muslims were apprehended and handed over to the Mughal Pura police station . . . alongside a list of 105 people, who were involved in looting, killing, and destruction'.[74]

There were however few prosecutions, or attempts to investigate these episodes. A close examination of police records reveals the different tone and tenor of the reported cases from time to time. Until the resignation of the Khizr government in early March 1947, registered cases in the FIRs revealed the identification of some of the activists of the Muslim League and Muslim National Guards who were involved in the street demonstrations and mass mobilizations. In the last weeks of British rule and in the immediate aftermath of independence, the law enforcement forces shared the sentiments of, and facilitated the mob. The party activists or the local leaders who spearheaded the processions were generally described as a 'Muslim crowd', and the attacks on the Hindus and Sikhs were, in the main, described as by '*namaloom afraad*' [unknown people]. Looting, arson, and destruction of the non-Muslim properties were described as '*sharpasand anasaar*' [trouble-maker elements]. As pointed out earlier, whatever the level of organization behind an attack on the minorities, the reported cases simply ended with the remarks 'this incident appears to be communal riot', and the cases were registered under IPL 143/144 [joining an unlawful assembly of five or more persons anywhere within the town, armed with deadly weapons] and 148/149 [rioting, armed with deadly weapons; every member of the unlawful assembly guilty of the offence committed in prosecution of a common objective]. Similarly, despite the level of organization behind the systemic looting, the majority of the cases of looting of non-Muslim properties were registered under IPC 395 [punishment for dacoity]. The cases of arson were registered under IPC 436 [mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house].

Cases were apparently registered for the sake of the record, rather than in the serious expectation that they would be followed up. The

lack of prosecution encouraged further violence and gave rioters a sense of immunity. As the administration further declined, shortly before independence, Sir Evan Jenkins reported that conscientious officers were driven to resignation in the communally poisoned atmosphere. Jenkins, for example, on the eve of partition reported that despite his persuasions a professional Muslim police officer in Lahore preferred to resign, rather than serving in 'a completely communal regime'.[75] The Muslim deputy commissioner of Sialkot, Raja Afzal Khan, who had arrested members of the MLNG for violating the curfew in the town was, for example, immediately transferred at the special request of a local Muslim minister of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, by the name of Karamat Ali Sheikh.[76] Unfortunately, this kind of action, and the failure of the police to maintain law and order for minorities, has been frequently repeated in today's subcontinent. As Asgher Ali Engineer has pointed out during the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, some officers who handled the situation quite professionally 'were not given free hand by the political bosses', and were instantly transferred by describing such transfers as 'routine' or 'promotions'.[77]

The local Muslim League leaders protected their fellows for any future prosecution. A post-independence meeting of the 'Town Salars' [Presidents] of the MLNG was held on 12 September 1947 in the city of Jhelum, in which a unanimous decision was taken to help the 'MLNG volunteers' who were arrested in connection with the partition-related disturbances. The President of the Muslim League of Khewra *tahsil*, Haji Dost Mohammad, greatly resented the arrest of one of his volunteers who was involved in an arson case in Pind Dadan Khan. Hamid Shah, the Salar of Jhelum, who headed this meeting, was sent to Lahore the following day 'to make a re-presentation' for the release of MLNG volunteers to the Salar-e-Suba' [President of the province].[78] On another occasion, the leading Muslims of the district reached a consensus 'to non-cooperate with the police in the investigation of cases arising out of disturbances and threatened to boycott any Muslim who betrayed them'.[79] The Police were forced to release culprits.

Sometimes, members of the law enforcement forces directly protected their fellow men who committed crimes. In Sialkot, the

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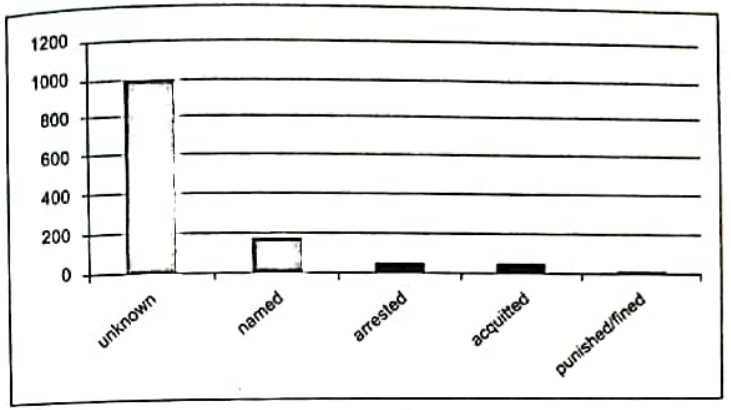
police of Thana Satra initially refused to file a FIR against two police constables, who looted the houses of Hindus in a village. In Montgomery district, the arrest of a head constable of the 1st Armed Police Reserve on a charge of theft resulted in 'rowdy' behaviour by his fellow constables in the force. They demanded the immediate release of the head constable and behaved in 'an in-disciplined manner'.[80] The Reserve had to be promptly disarmed and a departmental inquiry was initiated against the ring leaders.

After independence, acquittals were widespread. The police FIRs contain the annexures of the judicial part of the investigation process. They consist of the preliminary investigations, the court proceedings, and the subsequent verdict by the courts, if any. The majority of the *hamla aawars* who had been apprehended on the charge of killing, arson, or looting were acquitted on the ground of 'lack of evidence'. Most of the cases of looting and destruction of Hindu and Sikh properties and establishments were simply written off with such remarks 'record of this case has been shifted to India'. Apparently, such cases were transferred to India either at the request of the victims or the Indian government in order to file 'claims' for compensation against the destruction of properties in Pakistan. On rare occasions, culprits were brought to book. I followed up the case of Ismail Mohammad, who murdered M.G. Singh, the Registrar of the University of the Punjab. Ismail was arrested, indicted, and brought to Lahore's Session Court. The accused appeared before the court three times between November 1947 and January 1948. At each hearing, the case was postponed to a further date because of the absence of the eyewitnesses who were, according to the FIR, listed as ten people, including the Secretary to the Vice Chancellor of the University of the Punjab. Finally, on 7 April 1948, Ismail was acquitted by the court on the ground of 'lack of potential evidence'.[81] The outcome of this case reflects the position of several other criminal cases committed during partition, as is evidenced from Figure 5.

Figure 5: Reported Offenders, Arrests, Acquittals, and Punishments



Conclusion

Until recently, very little specific knowledge was available concerning local level violence at the time of partition. Piecing together the story of violence at the micro-level adds considerable evidential weight to the argument that partition violence cannot simply be dismissed as 'temporary madness' or aberration, a view held by some writers.[82] This analysis, based on the extensive use of previously unutilized police records, reveals that far from a spontaneous eruption, violence against Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab, and against Muslims in East Punjab, was organized with military precision, using sophisticated weapons and transportation. Police records also point to the fact that the violence had a variety of motives, some of which were political, but they invariably coincided with private desires for loot. The links between criminals and political figures still require further exploration. Nonetheless, it is clear that the violence would have possessed neither its intensity, nor its effectiveness in driving out minority populations, if there had not been a coexistence of both private and political motives. Large scale criminality was made possible by the breakdown of the administration and by its social acceptance in the circumstances of 'communal conflict'.

Police records also reveal the role of the PBF in the violence and the extent to which the police themselves were complicit. Another

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important insight is the fact that despite the evidence the FIRs provide of violence, they also reveal that few people were prosecuted for this, even when evidence existed. The failure to prosecute the guilty encouraged those involved and intensified the violence. The *hamla aawars* were not only free from the possibility of arrest and prosecution because of the transitional environment, but they acted with social approval and most importantly with the connivance and the complicity of law and enforcement agencies. Although FIRs had been registered against *hamla aawars*, subsequent records show that very few were pursued and hardly anyone was indicted. The complaints were merely noted down as First Information Reports and now provide sources for the historian. Difficulties of access mean that few scholars have as yet utilized these FIRs in their accounts. The study has also revealed the value of police records as a historical source for *thana*-level examination of partition violence in the Punjab. At the same time it shows that these records need to be handled with care and it is necessary to be able to read between the lines as they tend to reproduce colonial stereotypes of communal mob violence.

Notes

1. Estimations regarding the killings arising from partition violence have varied considerably, usually varying from 200,000 to three million. For details, see G. Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 45–6.
2. I. Talbot and G. Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
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5. G. Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and also see *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005).

6. P. Brass, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946–1947: Means, Methods, and Purposes', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5/1 (2003), pp. 71–101; A.B. Hansen, *Partition and Genocide: Manifestation of Violence in Punjab 1937–1947*, (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2002); I. Talbot, 'The 1947 Partition of India', in D. Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 420–33; I. Ahmed, 'Forced Migration and Ethnic Cleansing in Lahore in 1947: Some First Person Accounts', I. Talbot and S. Thandi (eds.), *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial and Post-Colonial Migration* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 96–142; J. Francisco, 'In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India's Partition Burning Freshly', in M. Hasan (ed.), *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000); H.R. Huttenbach, 'Locating the Holocaust on the Genocide Spectrum: Towards a Methodology of Definition and Categorization', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 3/3 (1988), pp. 289–303.
7. Brass, 'The Partition of India'.
8. D. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: California University Press 2001), p. 13.
9. Hansen, *Partition and Genocide*, pp. 195–7.
10. S. Aiyar, 'August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab 1947', *South Asia*, vol. 18, Special Issue (1995), pp. 13–36 and p. 28.
11. Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 58.
12. I. Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, 36, 3 (2002), p. 660 and p. 698.
13. S. Mayaram, 'Speech, Silence and the Making of Partition Violence in Mewat', in S. Amin and D. Chakrabarty (eds.), *Subaltern Studies 9* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 132–62.
14. I. Talbot, 'The 1947 Violence in the Punjab', in I. Talbot (ed.), *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947–2002* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1–15.
15. P. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*, (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2003), pp. 377–9.
16. Z. Moir and M. Moir, 'Old District Records in Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies*, 24/1, (Feb. 1990), pp. 195–204.
17. FIR no. 11, Note Book no. 34, 27 Feb. 1947, DPRO, Gujranwala.
18. FIR no. 20, Note Book no. 7, 15 Mar. 1947, Mozang Thana, Lahore.
19. FIR no. 34, 3 Apr. 1947, Mozang Thana, Lahore.
20. FIR no. 33, Note Book no. 16, 12 Aug. 1947, Thana Mozang, Lahore.
21. FIR no. 13, Note Book no. 56, 27 Aug. 1947, Thana Anarkali, Lahore.
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23. J. Mueller, 'The Banality of Ethnic War', *International Security*, 25/1 (2000), pp. 43, 58.
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30. FIR no, 282, Note Book no. 4/140, 13 Aug. 1947, Thana Mughal Pura, Lahore.
31. FIR no. 417, Note Book no. 249, 13 Aug. 1947, Thana Civil Lines, Lahore.
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36. Brass, 'The Partition of India', p. 83.
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43. FIR no. 398, Note Book no. 12, 1 Sept. 1947, Thana Anarkali, Lahore.
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46. *Rees Collections*, Punjab Boundary Force, Mss Eur; D 807/2, O.I.O.C.
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48. These figures are drawn from DPRO, Gujranwala and Sialkot.
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50. FIR 341, Note Book no. 23/33, 27 Aug. 1947, DPRO, Gujranwala.
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52. Mudie Papers, *The Sikhs in Action*, MSS Eur F164/23 pp. 29–9, O.I.O.C.
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55. A report (No. op.4/1) from P.C. Gupta, 4th Battalion (Sikhs), the Frontier Force Regiment, Gujranwala to Inspector Sadar Police Station Gujranwala, Note Book No. 109, 18 Aug. 1947, DPRO, Gujranwala.
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57. FIR no. 139, 10 Sept. 1947, Thana Shakargarh, DPRO, Sialkot.

58. FIR no. 85, 27 Aug. 1947, Thana Satra, DPRO, Sialkot.
59. Robin Jeffrey, 'The Punjab Boundary Force and the Problem of Order, Aug. 1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, 8, 4, (1974), pp. 500–3.
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61. Mudie Papers, The Sikhs in Action, Mss Eur; F164/23, p. 36, O.I.O.C.
62. These figures are drawn from the total population of four districts 4,649,000 divided into average district troopers—2084, yielding the result, Lahore (1,690,000), Sialkot (1,190,000), Gujranwala (912,234), and Sheikhupura (853,508).
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64. FIR no. 207, Note Book no. 18/1, 14 Aug. 1947, Thana Mozang, DPRO, Lahore.
65. FIR no. 207, Note Book no. 18/1, 14 Aug. 1947, Thana Mozang, DPRO, Lahore.
66. FIR no. [deleted], 4 Sept. 1947, Thana Sambrial, DPRO, Sialkot.
67. FIR no. 403, Note Book no. 13/56, 14 Aug. 1947, Thana Mughal Pura, Lahore.
68. FIR no 403, Note Book no 13/56, 14 Aug. 1947, Thana Mughal Pura, Lahore.
69. FIR no. 382, Note Book no. 2/150, 12 Aug. 1947, Thana Mughal Pura, Lahore.
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71. Minutes of the Joint Defence Council Meeting, 16 Aug. 1947, Mountbatten Papers, Mss Eur F200/130, O.I.O.C.
72. For the involvement of army veterans in orchestrating Partition violence, see S. Wilkinson, 'Veterans and Ethnic Cleansing: Evidence from the Partition of India', unpublished paper presented to a conference on Rethinking 1947 Partition Violence in Punjab, Southampton University, 15–16 Apr. 2010; and also see I. Kamtekar, 'The Military Ingredient of Communal Violence in Punjab 1947', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 56 (1995), pp. 568–72.
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4

The August 1947 Violence in Sheikhupura City*

Ian Talbot

On the afternoon of 25 August 1947, a number of jeeps containing soldiers from the 3rd Baloch regiment, attached to the Punjab Boundary Force, were seen roaming the streets of the city of Sheikhupura, Punjab (Pakistan). They stopped near the railway station and asked for directions to the *mohalla* of Ramgarh, a Hindu and Sikh suburb.[1] They had seen action earlier in the day when they had been called to the main bazaar of the city which was engulfed in flames. There were reports that rather than establishing order, they had opened fire on the Hindu and Sikh resident shopkeepers who were attempting to extinguish the flames.

With a population about 1200, Ramgarh *mohalla* consisted of four main streets, namely Kucha Abdul Rahman, Memberawali Gali, Ansariwali Gali and Madhuwali Gali. The first was entirely populated by Muslims, unlike the latter three which had large numbers of Hindu and Sikh residents. The *mohalla's* Namdhari Gurdwara and Rice Mill had been designated as refugee camps and were crowded with Hindu and Sikh migrants. According to an estimate, by late August 1947, about 3000 Hindus and Sikhs from other towns and cities of West Punjab had flocked to Sheikhupura.[2] The city, because of its importance as a rail hub, had also received a large number of Muslim refugees from India. Tensions had increased in the city following their arrival on 21 August.

*I am grateful to Dr Ilyas Chattha for conducting the fieldwork for this chapter. The sentiments expressed in it are entirely my own responsibility.

When the military detachment reached its destination, Muslims from the Kucha Abdul Rahman neighbourhood began to run away. They assumed that the soldiers were coming to restore order. The troops first asked for the locals' help and then sealed off the remaining exit points from the *mohalla*. They then began to open fire on the large number of refugees who had gathered at the Atma Singh Rice Mill. In the orgy of killing which ensued, virtually all of the refugees there were killed. Both the Gurdwara and the Mill were reduced to ashes.

The killings in Sheikhupura city were in all probability, the worst single massacre in the theatre of horrors which accompanied the partition of the Punjab. A report of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandkak Committee claimed that 3000 Hindus and Sikhs died in the Atma Singh Mill alone and the total number killed was between 14,000 and 15,000 in Sheikhupura. According to an official report of the Indian government more than 4000 non-Muslims were butchered in the factory, and 'more than 10,000 persons were either done to death by Muslim military and police or were burnt alive in the houses . . . [in] well-planned and nicely executed' attacks.[3]

It brought the newly installed Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan hastening to the city.[4] In a tension charged meeting at the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner Mr C.H. Disney, an Anglo-Indian, they attempted to damp down the flames of hatred which they feared could engulf other areas of West Punjab where pockets of non-Muslim populations remained. Disney recorded that he 'did not know the condition in the interior of the district' nor was he aware 'how many people had died.'[5] Disney had been based in Nankana Sahib since independence and had only returned to Sheikhupura on the eve of the massacre. He had left Pir Karam Shah, the additional district magistrate in charge of the district headquarters. In the event, two Muslim officers of the Baloch Regiment were arrested in connection with the massacre at the Atma Singh Rice Mill. None of the locals who had joined in the killing and looting spree in the Hindu and Sikh localities of Sheikhupura were charged. When relatives came from India to find out what had happened to their loved ones, no trace of them could be found.[6]

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The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the nightmare events in Sheikhupura. Aside from a handful of eye witness reports in the work by G.D. Khosla, surprisingly little has been written about the occurrence.[7] While other episodes of violence in the district, such as the clash between Sikhs and Muslims at Bhuller village, have been commemorated in community history and even by means of a plaque at the Golden Temple Amritsar, a shamed silence surrounds the events such as at Ramgarh. The cold blooded murder of a defenceless population does not lend itself to narratives of valour and courage in fighting against the odds as at Bhuller.

The chapter will focus on three key sets of questions: What led to the Hindus and Sikhs in Sheikhupura being singled out for attack? How can the actions of the 3rd Baloch Regiment be explained? Why was the violence greater in the Sheikhupura district than elsewhere in West Punjab? In answering them, the study will draw both on hitherto unexplored original sources, including the Punjab Police Intelligence Records and the Sheikhupura District Police First Information Reports and personal testimonies. Before examining the background and details of the Sheikhupura violence, we will turn first to the general literature on the partition violence.

The Historiography of the Partition-Related Violence in Punjab

Until the 1990s, little was written about the partition-related violence and its causes. The thrust of historical writings was on the achievement of independence, whether written from an India or Pakistan perspective. Where violence was referred to it was either in polemical terms with the aim to 'displace blame' onto the 'other' rival community, or it was seen as the outcome of a spontaneous irrational outburst.[8] The pioneering work of feminist writers such as Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, and Kamla Bhasin directed attention towards the human costs of the partition.[9] This was followed up by studies which began to see the partition violence not as a unique event, but as possessing similarities with other Twentieth Century incidences of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Such writers as Anders Bjorn Hansen, Paul Brass, and Ishtiaq Ahmed have begun to link the 1947 violence

with wider theories of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Brass uses the term 'retributive genocide' to capture the mutuality of the violence in Punjab.[10] Ishtiaq Ahmed understands it as a form of ethnic cleansing in which Muslim attacks in West Punjab were motivated by a desire to expel the Hindu commercial castes who dominated the region's economy, although they were a minority of the total population.[11] Anders Bjorn Hansen sees the violence in the Punjab as 'a reciprocal genocide' which 'occurred through organized mass killings that aimed at annihilating the "other" community.'[12]

The linkage of the violence with genocide was deemed inappropriate by many specialists however as they limited this analytical concept to episodes of violence in which the state apparatus was involved. The more inclusivist approach of Henry H. Huttenbach maintains that not just states but well armed communal groups 'with or without the collusion or cooperation of the instruments of the state' could 'embark on a genocide campaign.'[13] Jason Francisco has however supported the more traditional view that the violence in the Punjab was not state sponsored so that it is better referred to as 'fratricide'. 'The partition stands as the archetype of what I call nationalist fratricide' he declares, 'the conflict between people of a common cultural heritage.'[14]

A consensus is emerging from locality based studies that the violence may have possessed elements of genocide in its brutality, but it is better conceptualized in terms of 'ethnic cleansing' in the sense of removal of unwanted minority communities through the threat and actual perpetration of violence. This political element in violence co-existed with more spontaneous desires for loot and revenge in a context of administrative collapse. This case study is set firmly within the locality based literature on partition violence which seeks to uncover its roots and motivations. It sees the 1947 violence as having characteristics which clearly mark it off from what has been described as 'traditional' consensual communal violence. The latter conflict possessed elements of the feud and was about altering the balance of local hierarchies of power.[15] The partition-related violence in contrast was about creating the circumstances in which 'rival' communities could no longer live alongside each other.

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The Making of a Massacre

The Sheikhupura district became a byword for the August 1947 violence in the West Punjab.[16] In addition to the large number of casualties in the city on 25–6 August, there were attacks on refugee foot convoys and trains and major killings at such places as Sangla Hill, Bhullar, and Jandiala Sher Khan. Why was the district so disturbed at the time of partition? In order to answer this question, we must look back to its colonial development and determine the similarities and differences between it and other West Punjab districts.

(i) Colonial Development of Sheikhupura District

Canal colony irrigation had brought large numbers of Sikh farmers from the Central Punjab to the Sheikhupura district, as indeed was the case in a number of other districts such as Lyallpur. The new urban development which accompanied the agricultural growth had seen the banks and grain marts dominated by the Hindu and Sikh commercial communities, again this was a common experience throughout the newly irrigated West Punjab areas. Hindus and Sikhs also dominated the new professional opportunities and industrial developments which emerged in the later colonial era. The resentment this generated and the opportunities for loot in the circumstances of the collapse of law and order were contributory features to the violence, but do not explain for example why violence was greater in the Sheikhupura than the Shahpur and Lyallpur districts which shared a similar pattern of development.

As late as 1881, the population of Sheikhupura and its surrounding areas was as low as five thousand. The area had changed little since the days of Jahangir when the fort at Sheikhupura had been built as a hunting lodge for the ruling elite.[17] Its other main historical association was with Rani Taj Kauran, one of Ranjit Singh's queens. The construction of the Upper Chenab Canal in 1912 dramatically transformed the economy, demographic profile, and administrative landscape of Sheikhupura. The reconfiguration of land and its attendant administrative reshuffling arising from the irrigation project led to the formation of a new Sheikhupura district. Some

parts of the neighbouring districts of Lahore, Lyallpur and Gujranwala were transferred to Sheikhupura. For example, Khangarh Dogran, Shahdara and Nankana Sahib *tahsils* of Gujranwala district were given to Sheikhupura. Similarly, Trans-Ravi portions of Lahore district and a handful of villages of Chunian *tahsil* were awarded to Sheikhupura. A part of Jaranwala from Lyallpur district was also given to Sheikhupura.[18] On 30 October 1919, thus Sheikhupura earned the status of a district comprising an area of 11,000 square miles.

An immediate result of the opening up of the Upper Chenab Canal was a great influx of settlers into the region.[19] In the decade ending 1921, for example, over 230,000 people from the densely populated districts of the Central Punjab migrated to the Sheikhupura district. This number rose to over 350,000 by the next decade.[20] The bulk of these 'economic migrants' were Jat Sikh farmers from the Jullundur and Amritsar districts. By the time of the 1931 Census, they formed over 200,000 of the district's inhabitants.[21] They were granted land in the canal colonies of Sheikhupura, Sangla Hill, Warburton, Sacha Sauda, Chuhurkhan, Narang Mandi and Nankana Sahib. They were to face a reverse migration at the time of partition. Table 1 below reveals the mushrooming of the district's population, during the closing two decades of colonial rule.

Table 1: Population of the Sheikhupura District[22]

1921	1931	1941
523,000	696,732	852,508

Sheikhupura city's population grew significantly although less rapidly than that of the rural areas of the district. Its growth resulted from its increasing administrative importance and emergence as a communications hub and grain market. Within two years of the creation of Sheikhupura district, the construction of 'civil public buildings' such as court-house, treasury, jail and police lines were completed. On 17 October 1921, the first Deputy Commissioner of Sheikhupura, M.M.L. Currie, took up residence in the DC's Bungalow in the Civil Lines. The city also greatly increased in commercial importance with the arrival of the railway. Sheikhupura was

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connected with the main Wazirabad-Lyallpur railway, and the Shahdara-Sangla Hill line also ran through Sheikhupura. The Chickki Mallian-Shorkot line began to run through Nankana Sahib. In December 1926, the important Shahdara-Norowal railway line was opened, connecting Sheikhupura with Amritsar on the one hand and Sialkot and Jammu on the other hand.[23] The extended communication networks increased the importance of the grain *mandis* [markets] of Sheikhupura, Narang Mandi, Shahdara, Chuharkhana Nankana Sahib, Sangla Hill, and Warburton. Lahore was a very convenient market for the sale of rice, milk, and animal fodder. By the 1931 Census the population of the city stood at 12000—an increase of over 400 per cent from the previous decade.[24] While the communications networks were crucial for the growing urban prosperity, they were a contributory factor to the high levels of violence in the district at the time of partition.

By the eve of the British departure, the district had a total population of 852,508 inhabitants, including 542,344 Muslims, 160,706 Sikhs and 77,740 Hindus. Sheikhupura city itself possessed 34,000 inhabitants including 16,000 non-Muslims.

Table 2: Religious Composition of Population in Sheikhupura District in 1941[25]

Communities	Sheikhupura (dist)	Sheikhupura (tahsil)	Nankana Sahib	Shahdara	%
Muslims	542,344	201,101	174,787	166,456	63.6
Hindus	77,740	37,360	19,665	20,725	9.2
Sikhs	160,706	94,882	31,562	34,262	18.8
Christian	60,055	34,405	6,157	19,493	7.0
Ad-Dharmis	11,442	8,330	2,976	138	1.4
Jains	211	211	8	n/a	
Total	852,508	376,829	235,145	241,074	

(ii) The Sikhs of Sheikhupura

The Sikhs were prosperous landowners in the Sheikhupura district. Although they formed about 18 per cent of the total population, they owned one-third of the district's agricultural land. Apart from the 'Sikh colonists' who migrated to the region from eastern Punjab in the decade between 1921 and 1931, Sikh Virk Jats who were long standing inhabitants of the region owned considerable amounts of land. They had enjoyed a semi-autonomous status during the later period of Mughal rule. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's dominance of the region had provided opportunities for them to gain control over a great track of the district. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Deputy Commissioner of the Gujranwala district, reported in 1884 that they held over 120 villages.[26] The majority of these were awarded to the newly created Sheikhupura district in 1921. Their main concentrations were in Ajaniawala, Khanqah Dogran, Chhina, Mangat, Marh Balochan, Manawala, Narang Mandi, and Sucha Sacha where they owned a great number of estates.

Sikh landowners employed large numbers of Muslims as tenants and *sepies* [customary-employees]. Odham Singh of Kakkar Gill and the Sardars of Manawala were the biggest landlords of Sheikhupura and had numerous Muslim tenants and *sepies*. A former Sikh *sepia*, Kushi Mohammad, explained during the course of an interview in Manawala village: 'My father had been a *sepie* of the Sikh Sardars of Manawala down to their migration to India. In this village Muslims were landless and the Sikhs were the land-owners. Almost all the Muslims worked with them, some as *kamies* other as *sepies*'.[27] On the eve of partition, according to an official estimate, the Muslim tenants were cultivating over 417,570 acres of Sikh and Hindu-owned agricultural land in the district of Sheikhupura.[28]

Relations were far more amicable between Sikh *sardars* and their Muslim clients, than for example was the situation between Hindu landowners and Muslim tenants in East Bengal. Baba Karamata, during the course of an interview in village Manawala recollected the 'kindness' of the Sikh Jats. 'Sardars [Sikh Jats] of this village were very rich. They were very kind to the poor. They would help both Sikh and Muslim poor and provided them free grain on the harvesting of seasonal crops. They also sometimes bore the expenditures of the

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marriages of poor families' daughters'. He continued, however, that in spite of this many Muslims in Manawala 'looted the houses and properties [of Sikh Jats] at the independence of Pakistan'.[29]

The Sikhs not only possessed agricultural land, but also owned rice-husking and cotton-grinning factories and flour mills. Gopal Singh was the biggest mill-owner of Sheikhupura. His growing empire included the rice-husking and cotton-grinning mills, including the Gopal Singh Rice Mills and Guru Nanak Cotton-grinning Mills. Sardar Atma Singh was another leading trader of rice and owned a big rice-husking factory in the town, under the name of Atma Singh Rice Mills. It was here that a major massacre of Hindu and Sikh refugees was perpetrated by the local Muslim population and the Baloch Regiment. Ladha Singh and Mehar Singh dominated the wholesale grain trades of Chuharkhana town and their empire included cotton-grinning and rice-husking mills.[30]

The main pre-partition Sikh localities witnessed some of the worst violence in the Sheikhupura district in August 1947. We have already mentioned the Ramgarh locality in Sheikhupura city to which we will return later in more detail. Other important Sikh localities which witnessed large scale violence included: Nankana Sahib town, Chuharkhana's Guru Nanakpura *mohalla*, Sacha Sauda's Guru Gobindgarh *mohalla* and Sheikhupura's Narang Mandi, Shahdara, Sangla Hill, and Warbuton. All the above were exclusively Sikh localities and were fairly densely packed and contained residences, shops, and *mandis*. The greatest non-Muslim majority was in Nankana Sahib, where out of total 13,000 inhabitants, Muslims accounted for less than 3000 persons.[31] Violence in these Sikh areas in the district led to a concentration of refugees in Sheikhupura City, creating a 'target' population.

(iii) The Hindus of Sheikhupura

The Hindus of Sheikhupura were mainly Banias and Aroras whose communities had become established in the region during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Aroras were the most educated caste and dominated the city's educational and professional activities. They formed an important component of the district administration. Their

district-wide population was enumerated as 17,881 at the time of the 1931 Census.[32]

They were not only the most educated class of Sheikhupura city, but also controlled the retail and wholesale trades and the industrial sector. The Banias ran the mortgage businesses and wholesale trades of the leading *mandis* of Naranga, Muredke, Sheikhupura, Chuharkhana, and Sangla Hill. The Hindu commercial castes also owned many cotton-grinning and rice-husking factories in the region, as well as Sheikhupura city's biggest cotton mill, the Ganesh Cotton Factory. Baiji Nath dominated the wholesale trades of grains and owned two cotton-grinning mills and a rice-husking mill in Sheikhupura. Thakar Dass, Mathra Dass, Ram Ditt and Mal Berry owned Sangla Hill's leading cotton-grinning and rice-husking mills. Rai Bahadhur Lala Sundar Das owned Warburton's leading flour mill and both Kanhya Lal and Hira Lal owned rice-husking mills in the same area. Krishan Gopal and Ram Gopal controlled the trade activity of Nankana Sahib and owned the well-known Guru Nanak cotton-grinning mills. Similarly, Shahdara's Mahalaxumi Match Factory and Pioneer Flour Mill were also owned by Hindus. The latter was the biggest factory in the region and employed over 160 workers.

In sum, Hindus and Sikhs owned more than two-thirds of the city's property and business activity. The sales tax paid by non-Muslims amounted to Rs 115,168 as compared with Rs 7,365 paid by the Muslims. The Hindu and Sikh minorities of Sheikhupura not only controlled trade and commercial activity, but also swiftly took up educational and professional opportunities. They set up their own schools and colleges. These included two degree colleges, 14 high schools for boys and eight middle schools for girls as against only two high schools run by the Muslims.[33] The most prestigious schools in Sheikhupura city were the Khalsa High School and Hindu High School. There were also branches of Khalsa schools in Nankana Sahib and Sangla Hill. Apart from these institutions, Nankana Sahib possessed two famous schools, namely the Guru Nankana Girl High School and the Guru Nankana Model High School. There was an Arya Putri Pathshala Girls School in Sangla Hill.[34] As many as 31 per cent Hindus and 15 per cent Sikhs were considered 'educated' in 1931, against only 4 per cent of the Muslims.[35]

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Opportunities for loot and to turn the tables on the privileged minorities were undoubtedly factors in the 1947 unrest in Sheikhupura. Nonetheless, its Muslim population was not markedly more backward in relation to the Hindus and Sikhs than elsewhere in West Punjab. It is thus clear that we have to look more widely to seek to explain why Sheikhupura was at the epicentre of violence.

Borders and Contested Spaces

Recent research on patterns of violence in the 1947 Punjab has revealed the existence of what the British Governor at the time Sir Evan Jenkins termed a 'communal war of succession' in the closing weeks of colonial rule. Violence and its preparation were most intense in areas which were economically and symbolically important to community aspirations. The boundary making process set up under the nationally agreed 3 June Partition Plan heightened tensions, not just because of the uncertainties it injected with respect to 'border' territories, but because of the exaggerated territorial claims put forward to its Chairman Sir Cyril Radcliffe by rival communities. Work on such localities as Lahore and the East Punjab region abutting the Sikh princely states has shown how preparations for violence were made to pre-empt the Boundary Award.[36] With respect to Lahore, the Muslims made a claim for hegemony in advance of the Boundary Award through the destruction of the Hindu economic and cultural centre of Shah Almi in the walled city.[37]

Sheikhupura was no less coveted and contested than Lahore and Amritsar because the district was the cradle of the Sikh faith. Guru Nanak the founder of the Sikh religion was born in the village of Talwandi in the future Sheikhupura district. When the Sikh religion gained prominence, a Gurdwara was built on the spot which was renamed Nankana Sahib. During the Sikh rule of the Punjab, it was renovated and enlarged by Raja Teja Singh. At the time, six more Gurdwaras such as Bal Leela, Kiara Sahib, Tambu Sahib and Malji Sahib, associated with various incidents in the life of the founder of the Sikh religion, were built. Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted a flourishing estate of 17,000 acres to the Janam Asthan, (Birthplace Gurdwara) which had an estimated annual revenue yield of about

Rs 2,000,000 in undivided Punjab.[38] Down to the partition in 1947, a big fair was held annually in Nankana Sahib to celebrate Guru Nanak's birth which was attended by all communities.

As the prospect of Pakistan and the partition of Punjab loomed nearer, it became unconscionable to Sikhs that Nankana Sahib would be lost to them. Ironically however, it was a divided and troubled Sikh leadership in the immediate aftermath to the March 1947 Rawalpindi massacres[39] which demanded the partition of the Punjab and thereby created the possibility of this loss. The Sikhs were undoubtedly the community with the most to lose if the Punjab was divided. Why then did its leaders demand partition? The community certainly lacked the clear and decisive leadership which Mohammad Ali Jinnah had brought to the Pakistan demand. Factional divisions resting partly on personalities but also on the different interests of East and West Punjab communities encouraged an incoherent response to the shock of the Rawalpindi massacres. Almost as soon as the 3 June Partition Plan was accepted, the implications for the Sikhs were recognized by some of their leaders. They could not go back on this, but vested hopes that the Boundary Commission would deliver a favourable outcome when it considered 'other' factors alongside demography in its deliberations. The Sikh leadership pinned its hopes that economic stakes and the historic significance of Nankana Sahib would drive the border with Pakistan as far as the Chenab River. These exaggerated claims further diminished hopes for a rapprochement between the Akali Dal and the Muslim League. In its absence fears were increasingly voiced of a 'civil war' in the Punjab. Its likelihood was increased with the stockpiling of weapons and preparation for conflict. This occurred across the Punjab but had an added symbolic edge in the Sheikhupura district. The Sikh preparations to protect their historic sites in the district alarmed the local Muslims who responded by arming themselves. Significantly, rumours of an attack by a Sikh army circulated at the time of the Baloch regiment's action in Ramgarh. The Regiment had already been quartered for some weeks in the Sheikhupura district following its deployment by the colonial authorities to what they saw as an increasingly dangerous and sensitive part of the province. Its confrontations with the local Sikhs before independence help explain its violent attack on Sikh

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refugees who concentrated in the city in the immediate post-partition period.

The recruitment of Sikh military volunteers in the Akal Fauj was stepped up following the Rawalpindi massacres. Its membership in Sheikhupura, according to the Punjab Secret Intelligence Police Report, was estimated at 1500 in early March 1947. Ishar Singh Majhail was chosen as its head. In a message to the Sikh volunteers, he warned of the dangers ahead and exhorted the Sikh community 'to prepare for all sacrifices' in the future.[40] On 11 March, in a more provocative call the members of Guru Nankana Sahib Gurdwara Committee expressed their deep concerns regarding the mass killings of Sikhs in the Rawalpindi Division.

> All Muslims are enemy of Sikhs. The Muslims have made all preparations to fight with the Sikhs. As you know, more than 1233 gun cartridges were recently captured in Sacha Sauda. They were manufactured only to kill us. You must not trust the Muslims even though they are pious ones. As we know, Muslims of Rawalpindi assured the Sikhs that they would help them. They swore hundred times that they would help the Sikhs, but they ruthlessly killed our men, sisters and mothers. When a mad dog cuts a person, he is given an immediate an already prepared injection for cure. You [Sikhs] should always ready for such injections. You should never trust upon the Muslims; they are our traditional rivals. Whenever and wherever they get chance; they would get revenge from the Sikhs.[41]

This statement not only indicates the level of hatred and distress amongst the rival communities in the aftermath of the Rawalpindi killings, it also presages the intensity of communal conflict ahead. This provocation, however, led to the arrest of the head of the Guru Nankana Sahib Gurdwara Committee under the Punjab Public Safety Act. The arrival of Hindu and Sikh refugees from the violence stricken areas in the Rawalpindi Division with their 'atrocity stories' created further anxieties in police circles in Sheikhupura.[42]

The Punjab Secret Intelligence Police regularly reported the mushrooming of private paramilitary organizations, the enlistment of volunteer bands and their daily movements. By mid-May 1947, the Sikh Shahidi *jatha* (war band) was reported to have been formed 'in practically every Sikh village in the Lyallpur and Sheikhupura

districts' and its members were under 'an oath of explicit obedience to the Sikh High Command'.[43] On 24 May, a Punjab Secret Intelligence Police report warned that 'the Sikhs want Sheikhupura, Montgomery, and Lyallpur districts and would fight for them. By mid-June, the Sheikhupura Shahidi *jathas* had completed their 'training in sword fighting' and were 'ready for action'.[44] Bombs were also being manufactured in Nankana Sahib and its surrounding areas. The first bomb explosion in Sheikhupura took place in the Gurdwara Janam Astham Nankana Sahib four days after the announcement of the 3 June Partition Plan.[45] Bombs were of a crude type, often with soda water bottles as containers and frequently caused more harm to their manufactures than to the intended targets. On 14 June, for example, two Sikhs injured themselves while trying to prepare a bomb in the vicinity of Sheikhupura.[46]

Preparations for violence went hand in hand with representations to the British concerning the territorial division of the Punjab. Several months before the national leaders' acceptance of the 3 June Partition Plan and the establishment of the Boundary Commission, the idea was floated for establishing a 'Khalistan area' carved out of the West Punjab which would safeguard the canal colony areas and the Sikh historic sites. This area was termed the 'Shahidi Bar' and consisted of the tracts of land in Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, Montgomery, and Gujranwala where Sikhs held substantial property and a number of important religious shrines. Police reports warned that this area would be demanded for an 'original Khalistan Scheme'[47] and the Sikh community would be 'prepared to fight for them'.[48] Both for the resettlement of the Rawalpindi Division displaced Sikhs as well as to change the demographic composition of the Shahidi Bar area, the local president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandkak Committee (SGPC), Jathedar Mohan came up with the idea that the Sikh minority of Mianwali, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, and Muzaffargarh districts should migrate and settle in Nankana Sahib, Bhai Pheru, and Lyallpur districts.[49]

The Akali leader Giani Kartar Singh was at the forefront of the organization of Sikh interests in the Shahidi Bar. As early as 28 March 1947, he proposed a plan to safeguard the Sikh minority by the formation of a Central Group of Montgomery, Sheikhupura, Lyallpur,

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and Gujranwala.[50] During his tours of Shahidi Bar areas, in Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, and Montgomery districts, Giani Kartar Singh called upon 'the Sikh community to be prepared to fight for them and thundered 'offence is better than defence'.[51]

Sikh agitation intensified following the announcement of the establishment of a Punjab Boundary Commission. Giani Kartar Singh visited Sheikhupura on 25 June, and called upon the community to observe 8 July, the day that its Chairman Sir Cyril Radcliffe was to arrive in India, as a Protest day. In a further preparation, Giani Kartar Singh went to Sangla Hill's well-known Sikh village Bhuller Chak 119 and on 26 June formed a Shahidi *jatha* there. A late July Punjab Secret Intelligence Police report described Giani Kartar Singh as a principal 'agitator' and 'responsible for these preparations' in the region.[52]

The Sikh leaders demanded the Shahidi Bar area for the Indian East Punjab in their submission to the Radcliffe Boundary Commission which sat in Lahore from 21–31 July. In his meeting with the Governor of the Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh hoped that the 'transfer of Nankana Sahib to the Eastern [Punjab] was predictable'.[53] He also wrote to the Viceroy's Secretary that leaving this place in Pakistan would be like 'insulating the heart against the body'.[54] Moreover, in July on Giani Kartar Singh's advice, the Akalis of the Nankana Sahib decided to send a deputation of prominent Sikh leaders to the Sikh Maharaja of Patiala to request him 'to (put) weight on H.E. the Viceroy and complain against the division plan'.[55] He obliged just a week before the partition warning Mountbatten that the 'Sikh sentiment about this place (Nankana Sahib) is so strong that it would be most dangerous to minimize it, as under no circumstances can they be persuaded to allow this to go into foreign territory'.[56] While the Sikhs claimed Nankana Sahib, as part of a 'Shahidi Bar', the possibility of giving the site a special religious status was also raised. The Congress stalwart Rao Bahadur Menon had pleaded to Radcliffe the possibility that Nankana Sahib might be made 'a sort of Vatican' free state.[57]

All Punjabi communities were intensively lobbying the Boundary Commission at this stage and were issuing increasingly vociferous statements to the press. The leading Muslim League newspaper

Dawn, for example, carried a series of letters and statements from Muslim associations in East Punjab maintaining that they would fight to maintain territory with the 'last drop of blood if the boundary award went against them.[58] But the historic importance of Nankana Sahib to the Sikh community lent a particular desperation to their demands.

Giani Kartar Singh harked back to the policy of courting arrest used in the 1920s Gurdwara Reform Movement to alert the British authorities to the fact that 'the Sikhs are determined to resist the inclusion of Nankana Sahib' in Pakistan.[59] The All-Parties Sikh Convention which was held in Delhi in 22 July also called up the Shiromani Akali Dal to launch a 'Morcha at Nankana Sahib to protest against the unjust division of the Punjab' and prevent the inclusion of Nankana Sahib in Pakistan.[60] In addition, the Sikh community made some special arrangements for the protection of Nankana Sahib including the forming of 'Special Shahidi *Jathas*', each consisting of 11 or 12 persons. Giani Kartar Singh also obtained the services of 1,000 Mazhabi Sikh volunteers for the defence of Nankana Sahib Gurdwara 'on the promise that their community will receive benefits in Khalistan'.[61] A local powerful Sikh landlord, Amar Singh Dosanjh of Phillaur, further promised the Sikh community of the region to raise a powerful Sikh *jatha* of 250 young men for the defence of Nankana Sahib.[62] The Sikh princely state of Faridkot was also training special Sikh *jathas* 'in the use of fire-arms for the defence of Nankana Sahib'. The Punjab Secret Intelligence Police report of late July 1947 noted that a batch of 150 Gurdwara Defence Force of Nankana Sahib which had already arrived from Phillaur to Faridkot were taking lessons on 'how to use fire-arms' and were engaging in 'daily exercises and practising *gatka* and *lathi* fighting'.[63]

The Sikh preparations and territorial claims for the Sheikhupura district alarmed Muslim League activists who saw the district as being an integral part of Pakistan. As early as April 1947, the Sheikhupura City Muslim League National Guards under the command of Mian Amir-ud-Din had collected a sum of Rs 30,000, in addition to a purse of Rs 12,835 which was earmarked for community self-defence. When the Punjab Muslim League leader the Nawab of Mamdot, visited Sheikhupura on 5 April 1947, he was presented with the collection

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in a ceremony.[64] Nevertheless, the preparations of the Muslim volunteers were lagging behind those of their Sikh rivals. By late July 1947, the District Commander of Sheikhupura Muslim League National Guards was making frantic visits to the Muslim majority villages in the Nankana Sahib police stations 'for the purpose of recruiting and organizing the Muslim League National Guards' in this contested area.[65] The Muslim League also made representations that troops be committed to the region. This demand was to end with the deployment of the 3rd Baloch Regiment. Certainly the newly installed Pakistan authorities shared the view of their British predecessors that Nankana Sahib presented particular dangers. This explains the absence of the District Commissioner Disney from Sheikhupura City until the eve of the Ramgarh massacre.

The deployment of the 3rd Baloch Regiment occurred within the general context of plans for a Punjab Boundary Force comprising of five brigades and an armoured regiment to maintain law and order within 12 border districts. The force was under the command of Major General P. Rees who was to report directly to the joint India-Pakistan Defence Council. The 3rd Baloch Regiment however moved into action before the other detachments did on 1 August as part of British security measures at the time of a Sikh conference at Nankana Sahib which was designed as a major show of community strength. This earlier action, as we will argue below, may account for the Baloch Regiment's actions in the post-independence operations. Ultimately, the ill-discipline of the Regiment was to result in the winding up of the whole Punjab Boundary Force after just 32 days of operations.[66]

The British authorities adopted unprecedented measures to curtail the Namkana Sahib conference as they feared that it could lead to widespread conflict across the Punjab on the very eve of their departure. Alongside police, the 3rd Baloch Regiment and a company of Gurkha troops were despatched to Nankana Sahib. Sir Evan Jenkins, in a note to Mountbatten on 28 July 1947, explained the range of measures he had adopted:

> A considerable body of Police and troops was employed; all ordinary approaches to Nankana Sahib were guarded by an inner and outer cordon; wide publicity was given to the fact that the meeting was illegal; bus services were suspended; and the sale of railway tickets to a number of stations, including Nankana Sahib was suspended.[67]

To play down the importance of the event, the Punjab Government further directed the editors of all Lahore dailies, bi-weeklies, weeklies and fortnightlies to refrain from publishing 'any statement or report of speeches made at Nankana Sahib by the Sikh leadership'.[68] The colonial state's measures successfully curtailed the Nankana Sahib conference. 'Apart from local residents, from 1500 to 2000 outsiders attended the gathering', Jenkins wrote to Mountbatten, 'and we were able to prevent a gigantic rural gathering and to make it clear to the Sikhs that mass demonstrations about the boundary are not considered a good thing'.[69]

S. Dalip Singh Kang, MLA, the president designate, Giani. K. Singh and several other Akali Dal leaders however managed to slip through the tight cordon around Nankana Sahib.[70] They highlighted the community's claim on the Bar areas on the ground that the community had played a key role in their agricultural development as well as in the urban development of the region. They demanded a 50 per cent share in the total 'canal colony and waste Crown land' along with their holy shrines of Kartapur Sahib in Gurdaspur district, Nankana Sahib and Sacha Sauda in the Sheikhupura district. They also maintained that the neighbouring Sikh and Hindu tracts which constituted 'the life-line of the Sikhs' and comprised 50 contiguous *zilas* of district Sheikhupura, Lyallpur, and Gujranwala, should be included in the Eastern Punjab.[71]

Soldiers from the 3rd Baloch Regiment were involved in a number of clashes with Sikhs who were attempting to reach the Nankana Sahib conference. This is evidenced clearly from the following reports of their officers to the police station Nankana Sahib. For example, W.H.M. Lane reported to the sub-inspector of the police station at Nankana Sahib on 27 July 1947:

> This is a report of an incident of the troopers' opening firing at Nankana Sahib on 27 July at approximately 09:30am. About 60 Sikhs were confronted with a section of the army [3rd Baloch Regiment] that was under the command of Subadar Hanif Khan between the graveyard and

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the railway station area. When the army tried to stop them, several Sikhs called '*Hamla Karo*' [attack them] and they drew their *kirpans*. Many were arrested and the wounded were sent to hospital. Subadar Hanif Khan was also slightly injured.[72]

Two hours later, another party of 3rd Baloch Regiment, under the command of Captain Abdul Hameed, opened fire on a Sikh party that was heading to attend the event.

Troopers opened fire at Nankana Sahib on 27 July approximately 11:50am. Sikhs were ordered to stop. They replied that they would either die or go to the Gurdwara and nothing could stop them [to participate in the gathering]. They then drew their *kirpans* and moved forward towards the party of the army. The Section Commander Abbas Khan ordered to open fire on them. One Sikh was wounded and the rest disappeared. The wounded Sikh, who was the main leader, was admitted to the Hospital in a condition that was not serious.[73]

In addition to conflicts at the time of the Nankana Sahib gathering, the Baloch force was engaged in combing the area for weapons. For example, Hawaldar Mohammad Alam of 3rd Baloch Regiment reported to the Nankana Sahib police station on 12 August 1947:

We were patrolling the area when we came across a party of Sikhs. We stopped them, searched them and discovered a great deal of illegal arms and ammunition . . . they were arrested. Some captured people [Sikhs] were handed over to the Manawala *thana* and others are now being handed over to this *choki* [Nankana Sahib police-station].[74]

A similar report by Captain Abdul Hameed, provides evidence that weapon-searching activities in a Sikh village called Kot Barbar led to the arrest of Kishan Singh, who was guarding the village on the night of 14 August.

The arrest is reported of Kishan Singh, son of Sunder Singh, who was carrying a spear on the night of 14 August. On night 14/15 August, I was in the command of a patrol party that visited KOT BARBAR. At the outskirts of the village, I saw Kishan Singh was standing with a spear, which he immediately threw away in the near field as the light of my jeep fell on him. I approached him and asked him why he had thrown the spear

in the field. He replied that it was not a spear, it was a stick. I ordered him to pick it up and bring it to me. Kishan Singh then produced two spears from the field about 3 yards away from him. He said that he had been told by the village *Lambardar* [headman] to guard the village with these spears. I arrested Kishan Singh and handed him over to the police station Nankana Sahib.[75]

It is difficult to assess the legacy of these confrontations, for the events of 25–6 August in Sheikhupura, but they certainly injected a personal element into the general animosity Muslim troops held against Hindus and Sikhs arising from the rumours and reports of massacres in East Punjab. Moreover, the search activities of the Baloch Troops must have encouraged the sense that they were dealing with an enemy population in the Sheikhupura district, rather than with civilians who required their protection.

Non-Military Actors in the Sheikhupura City Massacre

While the 3rd Baloch Regiment perpetrated the most brutal act of violence in the Ramgarh locality of Sheikhupura city, other killings were carried out by the civilian population. Indeed, the Regiment was called into action supposedly in order to maintain law and order. How can we account for the more widespread outbreaks of violence? Here two points need to be considered, firstly that of the long standing dominance of the Hindus and Sikhs in the economic life of the city, and secondly, the concentration of refugees there as they fled violence in the rural areas of the district. Both factors provided grievances and opportunities for loot. What may be termed 'private' violence occurred within a general context of the breakdown of law and order and an environment in which minority populations were being routinely 'ethnically cleansed.' This process often had genocidal tendencies in part in 'retribution' for reports of attacks elsewhere in the province.

The violence in Sheikhupura city was in part so intense because there was a large 'target' population. Elsewhere in Punjab, there was considerable anticipatory migration. This was especially marked amongst the rich Hindu commercial castes of Lahore.[76] The Sikhs of the Sheikhupura district however were loathe to leave their rich

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landholdings and historic shrines behind. Just a few weeks before the Boundary Commission Award, the Sikh leadership, especially Giani Kartar Singh, was telling his co-religionists in south-western Punjab that there was 'a great hope' of getting not only Montgomery, Sheikhupura, and Lyallpur, but also Lahore.[77] The Sikhs were assured by the local leadership that Nankana Sahib would not become a part of Pakistan, and in the case of failure to achieve Nankana Sahib a 'plan of action' for its defence had been placed.

There were, therefore, few signs of anticipatory migration from the Sheikhupura district until the actual publication of the Boundary Award, two days after independence. Indeed, the Sikh population grew as many Sikhs from surrounding districts such as Lyallpur and Gujranwala started to camp in Nankana Sahib considering it a safe place. When Radcliffe's decision became known, violence engulfed the district's major towns, *qasbas* and villages. Non-Muslims began to move from isolated pockets to the larger enclaves within the established camps. Two major refugee camps were opened for Hindu and Sikh refugees in the Sheikhupura district: one at Chuharkana and the other at Nankana Sahib. The people from Sangla Hill and other surrounding areas prepared to go to the Chuharkana Camp. In Sheikhupura city, Gopal Singh Factory, Atma Singh Factory and the Namdhari Gurdwara were declared refugee camps. Their inhabitants, as we have seen, were to be hapless victims of the Sheikhupura massacre.

Jealousy and greed were major factors in the attacks on the wealthy Sikh and Hindu minorities of the Sheikhupura and surrounding districts. Even before the British departure this situation is clearly evidenced from the following letter by the leading Hindu grain trader Monshi Ram Chand of Nankana Sahib to the SHO [Station House Officer] Nankana Sahib police station.

> Today, I was going to the Mandi [Grain Market] Nankana Sahib; I noticed Isha Khan, son of Kalay Khan, from a village called Parawali, was arriving at the Mandi with a gun. He pulled the gun towards me and threatened me to quit [the Mandi]. He wished to occupy my trade. His gun is without licence and in accordance with the Public Safety Ordinance Act it is illegal to carry a gun.[78]

In the chaos of partition, the desire for loot became almost irresistible. The Hindu and Sikh refugees from Sangla Hill were plundered by the Muslim National Guard Volunteers. According to an estimate, 4 *maunds* of gold were collected from Sangla Hill refugees and only after they had been robbed were they allowed to march towards the Chuharkana Camp.[79] On 24 August, the house of one of the leading lawyers of Sheikhupura, Des Raj Missar, was attacked and looted and his three young daughters were abducted.[80] The refugees trapped in the Atma Singh Rice Mill were to be robbed of about thirty or forty *lakhs* of rupees' and 'seven or eight *maunds* of gold' before they were mown down by the Baloch Regiment soldiers.[81]

In the Sheikhupura district, as elsewhere in the Punjab, it was the most vulnerable communities and individuals who formed the principle targets for assailants. The unarmed refugees in the city were to become the victims of a terrible massacre. In the outlying districts, the well armed Sikh *jathas* were perpetrators rather than victims. Sikh *jathas* from Sacha Sauda and Nankana Sahib attacked Muslims and looted their property and destroyed crops.[82] In another raid, the Sikhs killed three Muslims and injured 16 and kidnapped one Muslim woman. Some Sikhs on horseback attacked Muslim villages in the vicinity of Chuharkana and police stations Warburton and Mananwala. Armed Sikhs from Nankana Sahib raided the Muslim population of the villages of Jhinda, Nanand, Buttar, Jatri and Chak No. 19.[83] An armed Sikh *jatha* attacked Muslims in Sacha Sauda and a village called Debin Singh, but upon the arrival of police the raiders escaped.[84] Such actions instilled a desire for revenge.

Hindu and Sikh refugees formed an easy target for retribution. Moreover, they could not rely on the police to protect them, particularly after the Hindu and Sikh policemen at the Sheikhupura Civil Police Lines were disarmed.[85] The partisan nature of the police is now a well established element in understanding partition-related violence in the Punjab.[86] The situation in Sheikhupura was no exception. Muslim policemen not only acquiesced in attacks on Hindus and Sikhs but instigated them by spreading rumours of attacks by Sikh gangs which led to retaliatory violence. The police even joined in with this at such places as the two Sikh villages of Bhadru and Chhapa, where about 360 Hindus and Sikhs were killed

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by police action in the third week of August 1947.[87] On many occasions, the Muslim Sheikhupura district police raided or opened fire on the Hindus and Sikhs. For example, the police of the Sheikhupura *tahsil* fired on some Sikhs of a village called Langar causing a fatality.[88]

The Massacre at Ramgarh: First Hand Testimonies

Alongside police records, it is possible to use personal testimonies in order to uncover the events in Sheikhupura. Nonetheless, as we shall see from those given below, they have to be approached carefully, not only because the passing of time may result in a hazy recall, but because they are subject to attempts to bring them in line with conventional understandings of the events they retell.

Abdul Latif, a Muslim refugee from India who now lives in Ramgarh's Madhuwali Gali, explained during the course of interview: 'When I came in Ramgarh from Jullundur both the factory and Gurdwara, as well as their surroundings were completely burned down and some refugees had already occupied their houses'.[89] Mohammad Sadiq, a resident of Ramgarh at the time provided the following more extensive and graphic account of the massacre[90]

> My name is Mohammad Sadiq. I was 17 years old in 1947. Our family settled in Ramgarh in 1943. . . . Yes I saw this all with my own eyes. The Baloch Regiment had already known of the growing situation in the Ramgarh *mohalla*. I still remember they (Baloch Regiment soldiers) wore red caps when they came in Ramgarh. (Pause) They were in uniform, (Pause) in khaki uniform. . . . In fact, Muhajirs incited us [the local Muslims of Ramgarh] to attack the Sikhs [of Ramgarh]. They arranged and collected wood and planned to torch Baghawal Rice Factory [read Atma Singh Factory] and Gurdwara. [At the time], there were many Hindus and Sikhs housed in the Gurdwara and Factory. They had come and gathered there from all over the areas. They were armed. We [Muslims of Ramgarh who lived in the street of Kucha Abdul Rahman] were constantly in touch with the Muslims of Hanjranwala (a Muslim *mohalla* adjacent to Ramgarh). They had asked us if anything happens just drum and we will rush to your help. We [Muslims] had collected many arms in our houses. My uncle Rashid had four arms, axe, spears and a gun. Similarly, the Muslims of Hanjranwala also had collected arms. Qatub-ud-Din [a leading man of this *mohalla*] had possessed many kinds of arms. . . . The situation [in Ramgarh] became worse with the arrival of Muhajirs; they urged us to attack them [Sikhs and Hindus]. They arranged wood and set alight to the Baghawala Factory [read Atma Singh Factory] and Gurdwara. The situation was getting worse. In the meantime, someone telegraphed or did wirelesses to the army and then the army came. This was the Baloch Regiment. The army-men asked the people [by-passers near the Sheikhupura railway station] where is Ramgarh. Someone told them just across the railway station, next is Ramgarh. Immediately upon their arrival, they surrendered [surrounded] Ramgarh. Three or four jeeps stood at one side of the road [Gujranwala Road] and other three or four jeeps stood on the city side area [Railway-station side] They surrounded Ramgarh in such a way no one could escape. Then, here, we saw big *burbadi* [mass killings] of Hindus and Sikhs. Everything was burned down. Here, *burbadi* was unprecedented. Here *burbadi* of Sikhs was much more than any other place. The Hindus and Sikhs were ruthlessly killed . . . women, children all were shot to death. Many of those who had concealed themselves in their houses were dragged out. They were lined up and shot by the army. Everywhere were bodies scattered. Their dead bodies heaped, burned down and many were thrown into the wells that were a little far away from Ramgarh. . . . Also all those [Hindus and Sikhs], who had concealed themselves in their houses were dragged out, lined up and shot. There were big killings in our *mohalla*. The killings of (Hindus and Sikhs) here (in Ramgarh) was much more than any other place. . . . There were dead bodies everywhere. . . . I do not know how many Hindus and Sikhs were killed but I can tell you hardly anyone survived in Ramgarh. *Sub kay sub* (all) Hindus, Sikhs and their women, children were killed. Only two Muslims got martyred. One of them was my uncle.

This important first hand account not only provides a vivid picture of the *burbadi* (mass killings) of Hindus and Sikhs, by the Baloch regiment but provides insights into the involvement of local residents, including his own uncle. There is clear evidence of preparation for violence. Sadiq however emphasises the role of migrants from India in inciting the trouble which brought the Baloch Regiment into the locality. There is the possibility that this emphasis can be part of a 'blame displacement' process by locals who wish to absolve themselves from attacks on their long time neighbours. Nonetheless, it seems clear that in a real sense the horrific accounts

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brought by refugees were a factor in 'retributive' violence across North India. As a young eye witness to the Sheikhupura violence reported to a British colonel at the time, 'the killings had been done to avenge Amritsar.'[91] Sadiq also picked up this theme explaining the massacres in terms of the actions in East Punjab where:

> Hindus and Sikhs killed Muslims ruthlessly and attacked them on trains. They killed Muslim women and children. They chopped off Muslim women's breasts. They were crueller than us.

In addition to the desire for revenge, the presence of refugees also created a pressing need to drive out local minorities in order to create a new spatial environment for them.

Revenge and 'ethnic cleansing' were not however the only motives for such murderous assaults. There was also the desire for loot. Sadiq admitted that:

> Many looted their (the victims) belongings. When Baghawala Singh Factory (read Atma Singh Factory) was burning, many went over there and looted rice and copper pots and pans. I also brought a sack of rice from there.

At this point Sadiq's son, who is a teacher, interrupted saying, 'No, nobody looted their stuff. Muslims did not loot any things from there . . . father are you not going to evening prayer' (*Azan*), which had already been announced. Here we see an attempt to maintain the conventional understanding of violence at an individual level which has parallels with the attempts, revealed by Paul Brass, by organizers of 'riots' in post-independence India, to control the discourse about their origins.[92]

Conclusion

This study supports the emerging understanding of the 1947 Punjab violence as containing both personal and political motivations; the former centring on the desire for 'revenge' and for loot; the latter on the claim and contest for unrivalled control of territory. It was this combination of motives in the context of political transition that

created the circumstances for massacres. Large scale killings would have been impossible without the acquiescence and involvement of the police and in the instance of Sheikhupura, the Punjab Boundary force. The study has shown that the deployment of the 3rd Baloch regiment in late July created a background of conflict with the local Sikh community which provides more concrete explanations for its murderous activities than the general commentary on its unreliability provided, for example, by Robin Jeffrey.[93] This case study also provides further evidence for the role of 'rumours' and the arrival of refugees as catalysts for violence. It also supports the view that tension had been mounting since the March Rawalpindi massacres and communities had been preparing for armed conflict which thus cannot be seen as an inexplicable and sudden irruption with the British Transfer of Power.

Many of the above factors existed throughout the Punjab. The Sheikhupura district was especially disturbed because of its economic and religious value. Like Lahore and Amritsar, it was a 'prize' to be fought over and contested. Communities made counter claims on its territory to the Boundary Commission which injected further tension and uncertainty. They also made elaborate preparations for violence to strengthen their formal claims and to fight it out, if necessary, if Radcliffe's award went against them. A final factor in the preconditions for serious conflict was Sheikhupura city's strategic location for road and rail transport. This created the combustible circumstances of a flood of Hindu and Sikh refugees fleeing the surrounding countryside with the arrival of trainloads of Muslim refugees from East Punjab. The extent to which transport nodes were 'hot-spots' in 1947 awaits a general mapping of the violence. This examination of the making of the Sheikhupura massacre hints however that there was a clear connection.

Notes

1. Interview with Mohammad Sadiq, Ramgarh, Sheikhupura, 13 Jan. 2010.
2. Rameshwari Nehru Papers, No. 25.
3. Rameshwari Nehru Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
4. For an account of Nehru's visit to the riot areas, see *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 2 Sept. 1947.

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5. Ibid.
6. Interview with Mohammad Sadiq Ramgarh, Sheikhupura, 12 Jan. 2010.
7. G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 126–41.
8. For the first approach, see S. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, (Amritsar: Shiromani Prabhandak Committee, 1950); For the second, see Javed Alam's approach as cited in G. Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 58.
9. U. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998); R. Menon and K. Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998).
10. P. Brass, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab 1946–47: Means, Methods and Purposes', *Journal of Genocide Research* 5/1 (2003), pp. 71–101.
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15. See for example, V. Das and A. Nandy, 'Violence, Victimhood and the Language of Silence', in V. Das (ed.), *The Word and the World: Fantasy, Symbol and Record* (New Delhi: Sage, 1986), pp. 177–90.
16. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 126.
17. See Nur Muhammad, 'Final Settlement Report of the Sheikhupura District, 1923–27, P/W 238, p. 34, IOR.
18. Mohammad, Final Settlement Report of the Sheikhupura District, pp. 1–3.
19. Imran Ali, *Sikh Settlers in the Western Punjab During British Rule*, Working Paper No. 94–04 (Centre for Management and Economic Research, University of LUMS, Lahore, 1994), pp. 1–19.
20. Sheikhupura District: Statistical Tables 1933, vol. 17, (Lahore, 1934), p. xiii, V/27/67/198, IOR.
21. Sheikhupura District: Statistical Tables 1933, p. xiii.
22. Census Statistics are taken from Sheikhupura District: Statistical Tables 1933, vol. 17, (Lahore, 1934), p. xii, V/27/67/198, IOR. Figures for the 1941 census are cited from, K. Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab, India and Pakistan, 1947 Partition Proceedings*, vol 6 (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1991), Doc 133, p. 382.
23. Mohammad, Final Settlement Report of the Sheikhupura District.

24. Sheikhupura District: Statistical Tables 1933, p. xvi. Singh, *Selected Documents*, p. 382.
25. Gujranwala, File No. K 21 (a) XIII, p. 92.
26. Interview with Kushi Mohammad, ago 70, (Manawala-Sheikhupura), 10 Jan. 2010.
27. The Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation, File no. B50, Appendix C, (National Document Centre (NDC), Islamabad).
28. Interview with Baba Karamata (Manawala-Sheikhupura), 12 Jan. 2010.
29. Sheikhupura District: Statistical Tables 1933, p. xxxvi.
30. Singh, *Selected Documents*, p. 357.
31. Sheikhupura District: Statistical Tables 1933, p. xxvi.
32. Ibid., p. 296.
33. Sheikhupura District, File No. 50-A, p. 240, (Punjab Secretariat Archives Lahore).
34. Sheikhupura District: Statistical Tables 1933, p. xxvi.
35. See I. Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies* 36, 3 (2002), pp. 657–704.
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37. Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 104, p. 357.
38. For details, see I. Talbot, 'The 1947 Violence in the Punjab', in I. Talbot (ed.), *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947–2002* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1–16.
39. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 8 Mar. 1947, p. 104, (NIHCR).
40. FIR No. 72, Note Book 84, 20 Apr. 1947, Thana Nankana Sahib, District Police Record Office, (DPRO), Sheikhupura.
41. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 5 Apr. 1947, p. 156, (NIHCR).
42. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 24 May 1947, p. 262, (NIHCR).
43. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 14 June 1947, p. 310, (NIHCR).
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45. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 14 June 1947, p. 440, (NIHCR).
46. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 12 Apr. 1947, p. 175, (NIHCR).
47. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 24 May 1947, p. 262, (NIHCR).
48. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 3 May 1947, p. 217, (NIHCR).
49. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 29 Mar. 1947, p. 141, (NIHCR).
50. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 7 June 1947, p. 287, (NIHCR).

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51. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 12 Jul. 1947, p. 366, (NIHCR).
52. Record of an Interview between Jenkins and Giani Kartar Singh, 10 Jul. 1947, *TOP*, Doc, 56, p. 73.
53. Giani Kartar Singh to Private Secretary to Viceroy, 26 Jul. 1947, in Singh, *Selected Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Doc, 123, p. 294.
54. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 12 Jul. 1947, p. 366, (NIHCR).
55. The Maharaja of Patiala to Earl Mountbatten, 7 Aug. 1947, *TOP*, vol. XII, Doc, 367, p. 564.
56. Minutes of Victory's Sixty-Fifth Staff Meeting, *TOP*, 28 Jul. 1947, Doc, 256, p. 377.
57. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 46.
58. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 19 Jul. 1947, pp. 376–77, (NIHCR).
59. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 26 Jul. 1947, p. 385, (NIHCR).
60. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 17 May 1947, p. 251, (NIHCR).
61. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 5 Jul. 1947, p. 354, (NIHCR).
62. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence, Week Ending 26 Jul. 1947, p. 385, 387, (NIHCR).
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5

Sikhs and Partition Violence: a Re-evaluation

Gurharpal Singh

Introduction

In the last thirty years there have been significant advances in our understanding of the causes and consequences of partition violence. In South Asia the rising tide of communal conflicts since the early 1980s has rekindled interest in the systemic violence which gripped northern India between 1946 and 1950, leading to the displacement of some 17.9 million people, and the deaths of another 1 million.[1] Brass, in his detailed research on Hindu-Muslim rivalry in Uttar Pradesh—India's largest state—has drawn our attention to the complex ways in which communal riots have been constructed, and how in this construction the memories of partition remain ever present.[2] For Brass, communal violence needs to be understood as part of an 'institutionalized riot system' in which the existence of political parties, an ideological context, and partisan state actors and institutions create inbuilt incentives to 'produce communal riots'. Varshney, in contrast, has applied the social capital framework to explain the causes and absence of communal violence in India's urban settings by examining in detail the degree of mutual dependence among Hindus and Muslims.[3] More recently, Wilkinson's research on elections has highlighted the importance of electoral cycles which precede, by escalating levels, communal tensions, especially where the competition for office among political parties (religious or otherwise) is close.[4] Gupta, focusing on contemporary developments,

has re-examined the anti-Muslim riots in Bombay (1993) and Gujarat (2002) and has stressed the importance of forensic analysis—rather than grand social science explanations—in identifying the perpetration of violence.[5] In addition to this growing literature on the emergence of violence and its causes, there has been increasing concern with the victims of violence and in particular with its gendered dimensions.[6] This research has pointed to the fact that because women were seen as the upholders of community 'honour', they were especially vulnerable to attacks from the hostile 'other'.

However, despite these methodological innovations a more rounded understanding of partition violence still continues to elude us. It is certainly the case that researchers today are much more sensitive to the previously excluded dimensions—caste, gender, ethnicity, subalternalism, and the need for self-reflection—but some obvious blind spots remain. If, for example, we accept the proposition that the partition was realized by violence, what then are the implications for the role of official authorities in controlling the disorder, both *before* and *after* August 1947? Why did some groups, like the Sikhs, repose so much trust in the outcome of the Boundary Commission? And what are the conceptual, methodological and empirical shortcomings of linking violence to a sense of community honour and dishonour?

In this chapter we probe some of these questions by focusing on the case of the Sikhs. We do so by seeking to explore a number of the unspoken assumptions behind the recent scholarship through a review of the main perspectives provided of the community's response to the creation of Pakistan. In assessment we argue that a more comprehensive and an impartial understanding of partition violence can only be arrived at by efforts to construct an overarching analytical framework. Such an endeavour, if taken seriously, would need to incorporate different levels of research that exist and combine robust qualitative and quantitative methods with a strong comparative dimension.

It is generally agreed that the ferocity of communal massacres in Punjab in 1947 can be attributed in large measure to the presence of a third community, the Sikhs, which disrupted the possibility of a clinical division of territory between Muslim Pakistan and

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predominantly Hindu India.[7] The announcement of the Radcliffe Award on 17 August 1947 divided equally the geographically scattered Sikh community. Unable to make a case for a separate state by virtue of numbers, the Sikh political leadership, it is often argued, first sought to ensure its territorial integrity by making outlandish claims on the Muslim majority areas of West Punjab, and subsequently, by ethnically cleansing Muslims from East Punjab. That the Sikh political leadership was able to accomplish this feat was not unrelated to a strong sense of communal identity, an ingrained martial tradition and supportive Sikh princely states. All these factors, it has been convincingly argued, enabled the Sikh political leadership to reshape the consequences of the Radcliffe Award to its advantage. The principle tool for this task was mass, organized violence.[8]

This narrative has become so much part of the conventional historiography that it has rarely been subjected to serious reflection. In the sections that follow we evaluate the main perspectives offered by scholars and official authorities on the role of Sikh political leadership and organizations in the partition violence. These perspectives, of course, are neither exclusive nor exhaustive but are useful as heuristic devices for organizing the literature.

Violence as a Planned Conspiracy

The first perspective echoes the allegations of the Government of West Punjab, made soon after the event, that the high intensity of violence which Muslims experienced in East Punjab before and after the announcement of the Radcliffe Award was part of a deep-rooted Sikh conspiracy against the Pakistan demand.[9] This violence was not only retaliation for atrocities against Sikhs in West Punjab, but was deliberately designed to carve out a separate state of Khalistan in central Punjab. The accusation was first made by Sir Zafrullah Khan in January 1948 and rests on a meeting between Mountbatten, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Sardar Patel and Captain Savage of the Punjab CID at which the latter presented evidence implicating Master Tara Singh (titular head of the Sikh community) and the Maharaja of Faridkot.[10] Rumours of such a plan had been circulating among Punjab officials after the Rawalpindi massacre (March 1947), but this

was the first serious official acknowledgement that Sikh leaders were engaged in elaborate organization of armed bands to expel the Muslim inhabitants of East Punjab and the princely states. Accordingly, the violence against Muslims, it is suggested, was organized with military precision and involved a large number of army veterans, sophisticated weapons and heavy transport. It was, moreover, directly underwritten by the Sikh Princes. In short, attacks on Muslims were carefully planned, well-organized, and had the objective of ethnically cleansing the central districts of the British province and the neighbouring Sikh princely states of the Muslim population, even though in some of these areas Muslims constituted a majority.

Recently this view has been given a further wind by the work of Copland on the Sikh princely states.[11] For Copland the conspiracy was much more than post hoc ethnic cleansing: rather, it was part of the unfolding of the logic of Sikh politics from the Lahore Resolution (1940) onwards which made the search for a Khalistan between the rivers of the Ravi and Jumna a real possibility. Copland sees in the dynamic of Sikh politics from 1940 onwards a growing process of religious consolidation among the Sikh organizations—the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Congress, and the Princes—and, though this consolidation came to be represented in the erratic leadership of Master Tara Singh, it gained momentum in the backdrop to the Radcliffe Award as the Sikh Princes informally mobilized their resources for ethnically cleansing Muslims from East Punjab; and if the conditions warranted, put their lot in with the cause of Khalistan. The latter objective, Copland insists, was much more than the idle chatter of the Patiala court to reclaim the former Sikh Kingdom of Lahore: in fact, it represented a real possibility, especially if Pakistan collapsed after its birth, or launched a pre-emptive strike against India to reclaim the whole of Punjab.

It is in light of these considerations, Copland has suggested, that we should view the massacres of Muslims in East Punjab because 'without doubt much of the violence in East Punjab was state-sanctioned'.[12] Although the Sikh Princes engaged in duplicity—displacing blame while condoning the killing of Muslims—elements within their administration supported the *jathas*' (Sikh armed bands)

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campaign, often without going to any great lengths to conceal these efforts. What enabled this support to be effectively delivered, Copland maintains, were three crucial factors: the strategic location of the Sikh princely states that 'give them command over the major road and rail routes between north India and Punjab; their comparatively large Sikh populations; and the enthusiasm of Sikh rulers for the SAD project for a Sikh homeland'.[13] Together these factors, Copland concludes, provided the necessary motivation and means for the Muslims' slaughter.

Copland's use of new sources from the Sikh Princely State archives certainly provides fresh evidence of how some of these developments were seen by Sikh Princes and their senior administrators. However, much of his argument, probably inevitably so, like the conspiracy theories before it, remain largely circumstantial and unsubstantiated. Undoubtedly the rate of deaths of Muslims of central districts of Punjab bordering the princely states was exceptionally high. But then this was also the case in other districts. Stories of Sikh princely bluster about Khalistan, moreover, were common knowledge in 1947, but no firm evidence of either SAD instigation of this demand or princely support for it has ever been established; Copland himself draws mainly on the questionable speculation of an American embassy staffer. Nor does his interpretation account for the reluctance of the SAD—unlike the Muslim League—to use direct violence to rightsize Punjab according to its demands *before* August 1947. If the Sikh political and princely leadership was determined to pursue Khalistan, why then did they place so much faith in the Punjab Boundary Commission to produce an award favourable to their interests? The answer to this puzzle, I believe lies, in the Sikh leadership's refusal to accept the role for which the colonial state, Congress, and the Muslim League wanted to cast them; it is also, in some measure, implicit in their opposition to the Pakistan demand from 1940 onwards.

Violence as a Cultural Given

Conspiracy theories have sometimes drawn on auxiliary explanations to substantiate the strength of their case. One such explanation that

is frequently alluded to is the Sikh proclivity for violence.[14] Although such ideologically based accounts have generally been dismissed as poor caricatures of Sikhism and the Sikh community, insider narratives often construct violence as an integral part of a solider-saint faith in which the defence of community and individual *izzat* (honour) take pride of place.[15] Yet these same constructions, as feminist historians and sociologists have pointed out, are also amenable to alternative interpretations: the normative values of the Sikh community which underpinned communal honour and *izzat* could, as Butalia has shown, also be turned against its own as incidents such as Thoa Khalsa (where women at the behest of men were either killed or committed collective suicide) illustrated.[16] If the ideological world of Sikhs and Sikhism was such that it could consume its own when threatened, how then would it react in circumstances of violence against the 'other' when odds were distinctively in its favour?

One provocative answer has been provided by Dewey.[17] For him the Sikh community on the eve of partition lived within a moral universe defined by Sikhism, an agrarian patriarchal social formation, and a colonial state which, through heavy recruitment of Sikhs into the Indian Army, sedulously cultivated the values of collective and individual honour. Sikh men, especially jat Sikh men, lived within a social world defined by *izzat* which produced 'hyper-charged alpha males' who were the colonial state's 'ultimate killing machine'. As a result, when the partition conditions weakened the taboos against killing, the Sikhs, as 'honourable' killers, came into their own and unleashed a terrible revenge against Muslims for the massacres of their brethren in West Punjab.

Despite the highly essentialist reading of Dewey's thesis, there is certainly a place for ideological explanations in understanding partition violence. Recent scholarship in Sikh studies has demonstrated how Sikhism was substantially 'reconstructed' by the colonial state.[18] It may well be that this reconstruction, particularly the role played by army recruitment, inclined Sikhs to become 'trained killers', but it was also a fate shared by other Punjabi communities—Muslim and Hindu 'martial races'. The construction of jat Sikh males as *izzat*-utility maximizers also overlooks the considerable variations within

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the Sikh community itself. Nonetheless, the major shortcoming of cultural explanations, even allowing for sophisticated deconstructions (feminist and non-feminist), is that they do not adequately explain the broader condition which made the massacres possible. Male jat Sikhs may well have been 'trained killers' *par excellence* in a society where violence was an everyday occurrence; they were not the only ones who had undergone such socialization, however.

Violence as Retributive 'Genocide'

The most common explanation of partition violence by Sikhs is that it was 'retributive genocide', or 'ethnic cleansing'.[19] For Brass, the events in Punjab in 1947 should be coded as 'genocide', though it was 'genocide' in which the role of the state was not overt, and in which non-state actors played a major part in the organized killings. This 'genocide' contained elements of 'design' and 'planning' of violence against Muslims in East Punjab, but it was not so much a conspiracy as an open secret. After the fall of the Unionist government in early March 1947, and the subsequent massacre of Sikhs in Rawalpindi, the possibility of a division of the province had became a distinct reality, and in this changed context, the Sikh leadership was determined to ensure that areas of Sikh settlement, including the prosperous Canal Colonies, should be awarded to East Punjab. As the Boundary Commission was established, the Sikh leadership made their intentions clear. In an interview with Jenkins, the governor of Punjab, on 10 July 1947, Giani Kartar Singh outlined the basis of the Sikh territorial claim:

> He said that they [the Sikhs] must have at least one canal system; they must have Nankana Sahib; finally the arrangements must be such as to bring three-quarters or at least two-thirds of the Sikh population into Eastern Punjab. An exchange of populations on a large scale was essential. . . . Property as well as population should be taken into account in the exchange [as] the Sikhs are on the whole better off then Muslims. The Giani asserted that unless it was recognized by H.M.G., the viceroy, and party leaders that the fate of the Sikhs was a vital issue in the proceedings of the transfer of power, there would be trouble.[20]

A day later, the Sikh leaders argued that after the massacre of Sikhs in Rawalpindi there was only one possible way out:

> The only solution was a very substantial exchange of population. If this did not occur, the Sikhs would be driven to facilitate it by a massacre of Muslims in Eastern Punjab. The Muslims had already got rid of Sikhs in the Rawalpindi Division and much land and property there could be made available to Muslims from the East Punjab. Conversely, the Sikhs could get rid of the Muslims in the East in the same way and invite Sikhs from the West to take their place.[21]

Thus, Jenkins was left in no doubt what the Sikhs were planning to do. In the run-up to the 15 August deadline, ethnic cleansing of Muslims in the *doaba* tract of Kapurthala, Jullandhar and Hoshiarpur had already gone on at pace.[22] And when the Boundary Award was announced, excluding most of the Sikh areas claimed in West Punjab, the Sikh leaders, true to their word, decided to 'turn the Muslims out'.[23]

While there seems little doubt that the Sikh response to the partition and its boundary award was retributive, this outcome, as the Sikh leaders made clear time and again, was implicit in the politics of ethnic cleansing in the West. From 1940 onwards, the Sikh political leadership was singularly opposed to the idea of Pakistan, and resolved to frustrate any agreement between the colonial administration, Congress, and the Muslim League which made the Sikhs a residual third party in the province. On several occasions Master Tara Singh had openly declared that the Sikhs would reserve the right to undo any settlement they saw as contrary to the community's interests. To be sure, this response was largely reactive, for the only imaginative proposal that the Sikh political leadership was able to offer to its dilemmas was *Azad* Punjab (an independent Punjab), a resized province with a communal balance of 40 per cent Muslim, 40 per cent Hindu and 20 per cent Sikhs. This, as Master Tara Singh knew well, was a non-starter with the Muslim League laying claim to the whole of the province and voices within the Congress calling for its division.[24]

In retrospect, given the history of the Sikh community, its share of property in West Punjab and attachment to historic gurdwaras and

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sites, it seems inconceivable that it would have conceded all this without a struggle. Ethnic cleansing in West Punjab was likely to have its logical corollary in the East because the prospect of a significantly large Muslim community there would have been perceived as a permanent fifth column. However, such systematic cleansing was put on hold before 17 August 1947 because the Sikhs continued to believe that the Boundary Commission would deliver what they were unable to secure through sheer weight of numbers. To be fair, the Punjab administration under Jenkins was not unsympathetic to the Sikh case, but as majorities counted it proved difficult to accommodate the Sikh territorial demands—short of saddling the nascent Pakistan with hopelessly porous borders, or elaborate arrangements for joint governance of religious places.

Another major limitation of this approach, which Brass tacitly acknowledges, is that the use of the term 'genocide' is inappropriate for the sheer range of violence, much of which was motivated by personal considerations—a point also highlighted by other researchers.[25] Although the Sikhs had a specific objective, namely to create *lebensraum* for Sikh refugees from West Punjab, this goal became entwined with a multiplicity of other aims in which *all communities* were equally implicated in trying to assert their will in conditions of state collapse and a 'communal war of succession'.

Lastly, as Brass also recognizes 'violence was a principle mechanism for creating the partition'.[26] As we shall see below, this important point tends to be overlooked in existing accounts of the crucial events between 1946 and 1950. Unless this fact is acknowledged there is a real danger of ascribing exaggerated importance to the political rhetoric of the leading *dramatis personae*.

Violence as a Function of Militarization

The argument that the partition violence should be considered as 'genocide' is deeply contentious because of the association of the concept with the Holocaust, and because an objective assessment of the causes of the violence itself remains hard to establish. Moreover, it seems extremely unlikely that any satisfactory figures for the number of deaths will ever be agreed.[27] But what is more surprising

is that, until recently, no serious efforts have been made to model the partition violence even with proximate indicators.

We noted above how the culturalist reading of violence was related to the high proportion of military and ex-military personnel in Punjab. How this relationship actually worked in practice and contributed to ethnic cleansing has remained something of a black box, until now. Jha and Wilkinson, in the first serious quantitative assessment of the violence, use the proxy measure of ethnic cleansing to provide an overview of the violence. According to them, the length of combat experience of Second World War Indian Army veterans was the key determinant of outward and inward movement of religious minorities in the erstwhile districts of Punjab. By analyzing the district-based data from the 1931 and 1951 census for religious minority outflows and the degree of religious homogenization after 1947, and matching it with veterans' data from the same districts, Jha and Wilkinson conclude that:

> Districts that raised army units that happened to experience greater frontline combat in the Second World War than army units raised by other districts engaged in significantly greater 'cleansing' of their minority populations. These districts had smaller religious minorities in 1951, experienced greater minority 'outflows'—reductions—due to killing, conversion, or migration, and greater inflows of co-religionist refugees.[28]

The statistical robustness of Jha and Wilkinson's model also undercuts the popular belief that much of partition violence was motivated by prospects of economic gain. In fact, in the inflow of co-religionists into areas ethnically cleansed, assert Jha and Wilkinson, security concerns were 'more important than the expropriative violence in these areas'.[29]

Jha and Wilkinson's thesis also finds considerable support in the contemporaneous commentaries. Ian Morrison, *The Times* correspondent who covered the partition, noted of Sikh violence:

> The Sikhs attack scientifically. A first wave armed with firearms fires to bring the Muslims off their roofs. A second wave lobs grenades over the walls. In the ensuing confusion a third wave goes in with *kirpans* and spears, and the serious killing begins. A last wave consists of older men,

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> often army pensioners with long beards, who carry torches and specialize in arson. Mounted outriders with *kirpans* cut down those trying to flee.[30]

In another dispatch, Morrison observed how the movement of Sikhs out of the districts of Lyallpur in West Punjab was undertaken with military precision.

> The Sikhs moved in blocks of 40,000 to 60,000 and covered about 20 miles a day. It was an unforgettable sight to see one of these columns on the move. The organization is mainly entrusted to ex-servicemen and soldiers on leave who have been caught up in the disturbances. Men on horseback, armed with spears or swords, provide guard in front, behind, and on the flanks. There is a regular system of bugle calls. At night a halt is called near some village where water is available. Watch fires are lit, and pickets posted.[31]

These episodes were far from isolated affairs: officials' reports at the time repeatedly mentioned the elaborate organization among Sikh groups which attacked Muslims in the central districts.[32]

Jha and Wilkinson's analysis provides a significant underpinning for what in the past has tended to be conjecture or mere speculation. It also—and rather importantly—adds a novel dimension to the argument in that the critical determinant was not the mere existence of ex-military personnel, but *the length of their wartime combat experience*. However, notwithstanding the theoretical sophistication of this model, as Jha and Wilkinson acknowledge, they are only able to provide a *proximate* measure of partition violence through *estimates* of levels of ethnic cleansing. Getting a handle on the actual killings, on the other hand, still remains elusive, not least because of the in-built biases in the data sources that are available. They also admit that their measures of ethnic cleansing may not capture the multiplicity of reasons that underlay the decisions of minority religious communities to leave their ancestral homes.

Perhaps a more important weakness of Jha and Wilkinson's work is that it focuses on veterans as *agents* of ethnic cleansing rather than the underlying *structures* that precipitated the causes. Although the agency of military and ex-military personnel was probably a necessary condition for the wholesale ethnic cleansing that occurred, it would

be difficult to argue that by itself it was a sufficient condition. From mid–1946 onwards the Second World War veterans—Sikhs and non-Sikhs—who returned to the Punjab confronted near civil war conditions, and though all parties involved in the violence drew on their services, this recourse was as a consequence of the failure of normal politics. In these circumstances, the human capital of combat experience might have increased the propensity of *all veterans* to kill or partake in ethnic cleansing, but it is equally reasonable to argue that under different conditions such a relationship would have been difficult to sustain. Indeed, in focusing on veterans *per se* there is a real danger that we are putting the cart before the horse, of focusing on the perpetrators rather than their instigators, and the broader structural conditions which routinized large scale violence.

Assessment

The four perspectives that we have reviewed above with reference to the Sikhs provide a useful overview with respect to how the understanding of partition violence has changed in the last 60 years. From its initial construction as a discourse of nationalist historiography, the study of the subject has reflected the shift from 'high politics' to 'politics from below', the importance of lived experience, and the use of new insights from comparative politics, genocide studies, and refugee and ethnic studies.[33] This conceptual and methodological richness has added immensely to our overall appreciation of the causes and consequences of events before and after 1947.

However, despite this scholarship, serious omissions remain, and these oversights exist in a context where there is no intellectually robust analytical framework for studying the subject. Now it may well be the case that such an effort is doomed to failure, is beyond the scope of the subject matter because partition, as some insist, is *sui generis* or essentially contested. But unless such an attempt is made, there is a real danger that scholarship will increasingly fragment into specialist studies, on the one hand, and the broad quantitative and comparative research, on the other.

One obvious issue that such an analytical framework needs to address is conceptual clarity. Today, language and definitions are

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power, and the use of concepts such as 'genocide', 'ethnic cleansing' and 'violence' pose considerable difficulties. First order clarifications are therefore urgently required to define precisely what these concepts mean in practice, and when, and how, they morph into others. Brass, in his use of 'genocide' has spoken of a continuum between 'communal riots' and 'genocide'.[34] Instead of a continuum, a clear typology, which should also include non-coercive pressures on religious minorities to migrate, for instance, in cases of anticipatory flight, would be an invaluable tool in mapping the degree and extent of violence that occurred.

Second, in light of the rich and complex studies which already exist of localities, communities, and regions, we need to build a deeper and a more comprehensive ecology of violence from 1946 to 1950. Research in ethnic conflict zones has demonstrated the remarkable benefits of this kind of painstaking work, which when it is allied to current techniques of computer mapping, can provide new insights, as well as provide dramatic representation of the violence itself.[35] A deeper ecology combined with mapping will enable us to explore in far more detail than hitherto, the complexity of the underlying causes that contributed to outflows and inflows of religious minorities between 1946 and 1950, if not beyond that date in the other cases like Bengal.

Third, the kind of mapping suggested above, of course, will be possible only if we are able to overcome the inbuilt biases in the coding of existing data. There is a general tendency among researchers on the partition to decry the unreliability of existing data sources but then proceed to use them anyway. In recent years, for instance, the increasing focus on the human dimension of partition violence has given broad berth to subjective experiences in which oral interviews feature prominently. Used without appropriate safeguards and filters, such methods are easily prone to bias or distortion. One way around this dilemma, as Jha and Wilkinson demonstrated in their analysis of the data on killing, is to triangulate the evidence to overcome or minimize this bias. Rigorous methods of triangulation would enable us to use sources hitherto deemed inappropriate. Thus, Talbot and Chattha's work on the localities of Sheikhupura,[36] Gujranwala, and Sialkot[37] has highlighted the rich data contained in the police First

Information Reports (FIRs). Clearly at the local level there are significant unused sources which could provide new perspectives on major flash points in the period between 1946 and 1950.

Fourth, an overarching analytical framework would also encourage researchers to better integrate the different degrees of violence and how national, provincial, and local developments shaped its outcome. Currently, as we saw in the case of the Sikhs, it is difficult to establish or verify the line of causation. Far too often historians tend to overemphasize the impact of 'rumour' or the 'retaliatory effect' of communal incidents. An integration of these levels, which are sometimes treated as discrete, would enable us to better explain why some localities were more prone to national or regional influences than others. Such integration, however, would need to be very specific so that it could offer some measurable indicators that could, for example, focus on the strength of the political formations and the potential trade-offs for them in supporting or abjuring violence.

Fifth, although there is considerable discussion among students of the partition that the violence was so widespread because the police were unable to maintain law and order, the social and religious composition of provincial police forces remains an under researched area. Police, and indeed, law and order, had become a provincial matter after the Government of India Act (1935), and as we know in today's South Asia, those who control the police have a major influence on local politics. In colonial Punjab, the composition of the police was overwhelmingly Muslim, a fact attributed by Jenkins to the reluctance among Sikhs and Hindus to enlist.[38] The same, no doubt, is also probably the case for the Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu princely states of the region. Yet how the unbalanced communal composition of the police actually worked in the turmoil of 1946–50 remains one of the seriously neglected subjects of partition research.

Finally, any meaningful analytical framework must begin from the assumption that violence was a means to secure the partition and not its consequence.[39] The key actors in the events which unfolded between 1946–7 were only too ready to establish their respective claims by force. The role of the Muslim League in Punjab, and to some extent in Bengal, was transparent in this exercise. Much less obvious, and no less important, was the part played by the Congress

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and its proxies. That leading spokesmen like Jinnah, Patel, and Baldev Singh were simultaneously engaged in undermining the civil and military administration in Punjab while accusing it of partiality or incompetence was dramatically demonstrated in the accusations that they levelled against Jenkins in August that he was being deliberately negligent in enforcing law and order. Jenkins' considered response systematically demolished these leaders' accusations while drawing attention to the practical difficulties of imposing martial law in conditions where the 'two nations' were fighting 'one and another in the streets, in the markets, and in the fields and villages'.[40] In this 'communal war of succession', orchestrated by the Congress, Muslim League, and the Akalis, the administration was hopelessly overwhelmed. To accuse it of deliberate neglect was to accept the double-speak of politicians who had first inflamed the passions which had made the division of the province possible. As Jenkins tersely put it, the critics of his administration themselves were 'participants in the events in which they profess[ed] to deplore'.[41]

As our focus on the Sikhs has shown, there are hints and suggestions that after 15 August 1947 the Government of India under the Congress engaged in ethnic cleansing through proxies (the Sikh Princes). Copland is most forthright in making this case. He acknowledges that evidence for this is difficult to establish and will remain largely circumstantial, but is supported by the unconfirmed comments of Sardar Patel and the strong handed measures used to crush communal violence in other regions, especially Uttar Pradesh.[42] Why the 'Iron Sardar' refrained from a similar response in the Sikh princely states which were the epicentres of the massacres of Muslims remains a mystery.

In conclusion, it needs to be reiterated that though the study of partition violence today is distinguished by theoretical sophistication and complexity never attained by a previous generation of scholars, it has singularly failed to yield a systematic overview that the subject desperately deserves. If anything the last two decades have witnessed something of a fragmentation of research into sub-fields marked by increasing disciplinary specialization. Almost sixty years after the event, the case for a more viable—not to say a realistic—overarching analytical framework still remains. This is the major challenge that

confronts the next generation of partition scholars. Undertaken appropriately and with rigour, it also holds the tantalizing promise of substantially redefining the subject matter itself.

Notes

1. See P. Bharadwaj, A. Khwaja, and A. Mian, 'The Big March: Migratory Flows after the Partition of India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30th Aug.(2008), pp. 39–49.
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3. A. Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2003).
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38. Carter, *Punjab Politics*, p. 210.
39. This is not to argue that violence was also inbuilt into those processes which sought to avoid the division of the country.
40. Carter, *Punjab Politics*, p. 201. For an extended assessment of Jenkins' role as Governor, see the contribution by Lloyd in Chapter 9.
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Part II

Politics

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6

Wavell and the 'High Politics' of his Replacement as Viceroy in March 1947

Victoria Schofield

On 4 February 1947, Field Marshal Lord Wavell was informed by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Clement Attlee, that he was being replaced as Viceroy of India. The Prime Minister began by referring to the 'wide divergence of view' which he believed existed between what the Viceroy was proposing for the interim period before India achieved its independence and what the British government considered was the way forward. However, in the same breathe he gave another reason: 'You were, I understand, informed that your appointment was a war appointment and that while the usual term for a Viceroy is five years, this might not apply. I think that three years was mentioned. This has now expired.' Attlee went on to say that the Indian problem was entering 'a new phase, which will be very exacting and may be prolonged. . . . In view of all these circumstances and of the fact that it is specially necessary that the Viceroy should be in full agreement with the policy of His Majesty's Government, I think that you may agree that the time has come to make a change in the Viceroyalty.'[1] This sudden dismissal came as a shock to Wavell. Only two months previously he had been in London and Attlee had assured him of his full support in the coming months as Britain continued its attempt to disengage from India.

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Why was Wavell dismissed?

To understand Wavell's dismissal it is necessary to examine the prevailing situation in Britain and India. Attlee was under both political and economic pressure to make good his promise to decolonize after the war, which had cost Britain an estimated one-quarter of its national wealth. The army was demobilizing; money was needed in order to fulfil the Labour Party's pledge to create a 'Welfare State'. Shortly after becoming Prime Minister in July 1945, Attlee had signed the Anglo-American Loan Agreement to alleviate the hardships of Britain's bankrupt economy. This also reinforced Britain's dependence on the United States, whose foreign policy was determinedly anti-colonial.[2] There was also a sense of indebtedness to India for the assistance given by the Indian Army during the war—and hence a desire to fulfil Britain's promises of self-governance, given intermittently since the end of the First World War. Furthermore, while attempting to transfer power in India, Attlee was involved in a parallel series of intractable negotiations in the Middle East over Palestine.

By early 1947, the process by which the British government hoped to leave India had stalled. The two major political parties, the Indian National Congress Party, whose President was Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Muslim League, presided over by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, were estranged.[3] Although Wavell had succeeded in getting representatives from each party to join the Viceroy's Executive Council (or Cabinet as it was now called, of which Nehru was Prime Minister), they sat sullenly across the table, squabbling about portfolios without any obvious sign that they intended to work together in a united independent India. Communal rioting had erupted in Calcutta and spread throughout Bengal into Bihar and the United Provinces. There were disturbances in the Punjab. There had been a mutiny in the Indian Navy which, although suppressed, was a portent that there might be further dissent within the armed forces. Unlike in the past when the British Empire in India was hailed as the jewel in the crown, in the post-war period, India had become a burden.

During discussions in London in December 1946, the best that the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, had offered Attlee out of a choice of four

possible options was the suggestion that a date should be set for Britain's withdrawal from India to commence no later than March 1947 and to be concluded no later than the Spring of 1948. According to the Viceroy, who knew better than anyone the difficulties of reconciling the two major political parties, the other options were impracticable: Britain had gone too far in the process of its departure to halt discussions and remain for a longer, indefinite period; the British government did not want to accede to the Muslim League's request to partition the country which, as the Congress Party had made clear, it violently opposed; nor did they wish to 'surrender' to Congress as the majority party because this was not 'an honourable or wise policy'.[4] Unfortunately for Wavell, his fourth option: the suggestion that Britain should begin a gradual withdrawal of its presence to the north-west and the north-east was redolent of his 'breakdown plan' dispatched to London earlier in the year.[5] In Attlee's opinion, citing Churchill, the military evacuation of India amounted to a 'sordid scuttle' which he would not countenance.[6] Moreover, it appeared to be leading 'straight in the direction of Pakistan', which the British government at this juncture did not wish to concede.[7] Hence, Attlee felt able to suggest that the reason for dismissing Wavell was because of a 'wide divergence of opinion'.

What Attlee really wanted to achieve by replacing Wavell was a different personality to negotiate with the Indian political leaders. As he later explained: 'I came to the conclusion that Wavell had shot his bolt and that I must find somebody else. I thought very hard on that and looked round. And suddenly I had what I now think was an inspiration.'[8] The man Attlee wanted to appoint was Rear-Admiral Lord Mountbatten, whose credentials appeared ideal: he was a cousin of the King and would therefore have sufficient stature to deal with the approximately 560 princes whose relationship of paramountcy with Britain was also being reviewed; he had also recently returned from India, having been Supreme Allied Commander in South-East Asia in the last years of the war. And he had formed an important friendship with Nehru who, as leader of the majority Congress Party, it was essential to appease if agreement on demission of power were ever to be reached. Although he was not a politician and was not acquainted with the political situation, he knew India's landscape.

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Aged 46, he had energy, whereas Wavell—17 years his senior—appeared tired, or, as Attlee said, 'pretty defeatist'; Mountbatten also had charm and charisma, which contrasted dramatically with Wavell whom Attlee described as being 'a singularly silent soldier. A great man in many ways, but a curious silent bird and I don't think silent people get on very well with Indians, who are very loquacious.'[9]

However, the premature removal of a man of Wavell's eminence—a Field Marshal, and former Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East and in India—had to be carefully handled. Never in the history of the viceroyalty—since the office was first instituted after the 1857–58 Indian Revolt had a Viceroy been summarily removed. Wavell's predecessor, Lord Linlithgow had even been in office for seven years, instead of the customary five, because of the difficulty of finding a suitable successor and the exigencies of the war. Furthermore, by replacing Wavell, Attlee was dismissing a Viceroy who already had considerable understanding of the Indian political situation. And, as Attlee recognized, he had 'the support of the most experienced civil servants in India.'[10] Wavell had also developed a deep understanding of the Indian people; part of his childhood was spent in southern India, and as a subaltern, he spent nearly five years on the North-West Frontier, which he later described as some of the happiest years of his life. During the First World War in Palestine, and in North Africa during the Second World War, he had served with Indian soldiers. Between 1941 and 1943, he was Commander-in-Chief India, before being appointed Viceroy of India by Churchill. Much to Churchill's annoyance, who thought that Wavell as a soldier would have no interest in the political situation, Wavell had busied himself at the outset on how to address the Indians' demands for self-government during wartime. He had also recognized that parts of India were starving and as soon as he arrived in Delhi as Viceroy in October 1943, he visited the famine-stricken areas of Bengal; as noted by his future Private Secretary, George Abell, this 'gave him a very good start with Indian public opinion, which wrote him down as active and sympathetic.'[11] During the first six months of his viceroyalty, he visited all eleven provinces of British India and a number of the princely states.

As soon as the war was over, in June 1945, Wavell had persuaded Churchill to permit him to hold a conference at Simla at which the leaders of India's main political parties could discuss their future. For the first time, those who had been jailed as subversives during the war were treated as future rulers. As a result, Wavell's reputation had been enhanced among the Indian leaders. He was reported as having said that whatever their differing political opinions, the Indians were gentlemen. 'This remark of the Viceroy spread all over Simla and created a stir in both official and non-official circles,' noted the then President of the Indian National Congress Party, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who also praised Wavell for making 'no attempt at embellishment' in relation to the difficulties which lay ahead.[12] Undaunted by the fact that he had been unable to obtain agreement between the Muslim League and the Congress Party, in the succeeding months, Wavell continued to keep the issue on the British government's agenda. His constant demand was for a 'policy', coupled with expressing the fear that if the British government took no steps to determine how power was to be transferred to the Indians, the country could slide into chaos.

In determining to have a change of Viceroy in early 1947, Attlee's first preference was for Wavell to step aside gracefully by offering to resign. The Prime Minister initially thought of sending out Mountbatten—with whom Wavell had frequently conferred while Mountbatten was Supreme Allied Commander—to talk over the situation and hopefully elicit a resignation. But Mountbatten refused to become the interlocutor, intimating that if they wanted Wavell to resign 'nicely' then they would have to request him to do so in person.[13] In early January, Attlee wrote to Wavell suggesting that he return to England for further discussions. But, whilst theoretically enjoying Attlee's confidence, Wavell had sufficient acumen to realize that his position was under threat and he refused to come home on the grounds that he had no further suggestions regarding India's political future to make. As he confided to his journal: 'It is possible that the idea is to get me home and force my resignation.'[14] When Wavell's letter, pointing out that there was no value in his returning home, was received, Sir Stafford Cripps, who, as well as being President of the Board of Trade, was a leading member of the India

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and Burma Committee, could barely hide his annoyance. As he told Mountbatten: 'The delay is very irritating, but I do not see how it can be avoided without creating quite undue heat and friction.'[15]

Attlee was therefore left with no alternative but to write again to Wavell telling him that he was to be replaced as Viceroy. Unwilling to state his true feelings, Attlee's letter was carefully worded, highlighting the alleged 'wide divergence' of opinion and reminding Wavell that he had only been appointed as a 'wartime' Viceroy. In further correspondence Wavell was told that his successor was to be Mountbatten. In Attlee's opinion, the uncertain political situation warranted a rapid transition and Wavell was informed that the hand-over would take place in March, giving the outgoing Viceroy little more than a month to effect his departure. Wavell immediately challenged the grounds on which he was being dismissed. 'You are causing me to be removed because of what you term a wide divergence of policy. The divergence, as I see it, is between my wanting a definite policy for the interim period and HMG refusing to give me one.' He also refuted Attlee's contention that the 'three-year' period of his wartime viceroyalty had expired. 'I think you are in error about a term of three years having been mentioned; but the point is immaterial, since the three year term passed several months ago without your giving any indication of wishing to make a change.' What also affronted him was the immediacy of his removal. As he continued in his letter to Attlee 'I am entitled to observe that so summary a dismissal of His Majesty's representative in India is hardly in keeping with the dignity of the appointment. It has been usual to give a retiring Viceroy six months' notice of his replacement.'[16] Attlee was equally tested in the House of Commons by the leader of the opposition, Winston Churchill, who, having appointed Wavell, took a particular interest in his dismissal. Although it is now known that Churchill was scoring political points against Attlee, rather than defending Wavell because he applauded his qualities, he too ridiculed his replacement as a 'wartime Viceroy': 'Is it not a fact that if Lord Wavell's Viceroyalty had ended with the war, it would have ended 18 months ago, and that if it had ended after three years it would have ended in June last?' Churchill's intervention also highlighted the fact that there was more to Wavell's dismissal than Attlee was prepared

to divulge: 'Surely the Prime Minister did not wake up one morning and say "Oh, let us get another Viceroy!"?'[17]

'High Politics'

Churchill was right: contrary to Attlee's retrospective explanation of Wavell's replacement and the need for a breakthrough in the negotiations, Wavell's removal as Viceroy had been the subject of discussion for over a year. Even when he was deputy Prime Minister in Winston Churchill's coalition government, Attlee had not supported Wavell's demands for a policy on India.[18] His particular grievance was that Wavell was a soldier and not a politician. In December 1945, as Prime Minister, Attlee had written to his recently appointed Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence: 'I think you share my doubts as to whether Wavell has sufficient political *nous* to deal with the situation. He has not the political training.'[19] Whilst agreeing with the Prime Minister, at this early stage, Pethick-Lawrence was wary of the impact of removing Wavell. 'Although I am aware of the Viceroy's limitations, I am told he has won the confidence of Indian leaders because of his sincerity. If he resigns, it might be believed that he was more liberal than HMG.'[20] Attlee therefore did nothing; instead, in response to Wavell's warnings, he turned his attention to attempting to pick up the pieces of the failed Simla Conference. In early 1946, he dispatched a 'Cabinet Mission' to assess the situation and hopefully devise a plan which would provide India with 'a new constitutional structure'. Rather than dictate terms, the Prime Minister was anxious that what was agreed would reflect the Indian politicians' thinking. Prior to the arrival of the mission, or the 'three magi' as Wavell liked to call the three-man delegation, he had made it clear that he did not wish to be treated as a 'lay figure' and intended to be fully involved in discussing the proposals.

Unfortunately for Wavell (with the exception of A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty whose knowledge of India was 'scanty'), the members of the Mission were men with whom he had little rapport: in addition to Pethick-Lawrence, who Wavell found was 'inclined to be sloppy and long-winded', Sir Stafford Cripps had once

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more returned to India. His last mission was on behalf of Churchill when, in 1942, he had attempted to offer the Indian leaders complete Indianisation of the Viceroy's Executive Council in return for greater support during the war, with a view to getting full independence afterwards. But the visit had failed and was the prelude to mass civil agitation by the Congress Party. Back in India in 1946, he appeared determined not to fall foul of the majority Congress politicians; although Wavell acknowledged Cripps' skill as 'an expert and incisive cross-examiner', he was wary of what he considered to be his now over-zealous desire to please Congress at the expense of the Muslim League.[21] Despite Wavell's seniority, both in age and position, there was, as noted by Penderel Moon, who edited Wavell's *Viceroy's Journal*, 'a natural disharmony between the straightforward soldier and the rather slippery lawyer and politician.'[22]

Within a short period of time, as at Simla in 1945, it became clear that the Indian politicians could not agree between themselves and it would be up to the Mission to put forward its own suggestions; these evolved into the Cabinet Mission Plan for the transference of power to a federal India divided into groups A, B, and C. In groups B and C, in the north-west and north-east of the subcontinent, Muslims were in the majority, whereas group A contained the majority Hindu population. Yet again, the intention was for the Indian politicians to agree to the proposal rather than have it enforced upon them. Although, after three months in exceptional heat, the mission was eventually able to depart in the belief that the Cabinet Mission Plan had been accepted by both the Congress Party and the Muslim League, it was a superficial acceptance. Within a few weeks, despite eulogistic reports in the British press on the 'success' of the mission, the fragile accord began to unravel, leaving Wavell once more trying to effect a reconciliation.

After returning to England, Cripps began to talk openly about the need to replace Wavell; at one point he even considered that he might prove a suitable candidate for the viceroyalty himself.[23] Although Wavell's relations had been less strained with Pethick-Lawrence, at no time did Wavell experience the same support which he had received from Leopold Amery, Secretary of State for India under Churchill. Difficult as his relationship had been with Churchill, he

had always had Amery to state his case. In addition, Congress supporters were speaking openly against the Viceroy on the grounds that he was favouring the position of the Muslim League. Sudhir Ghosh, a young Cambridge graduate who had acted as the go-between Cripps and Gandhi while the Cabinet Mission was in India, was urging Cripps to find a Viceroy 'with a much bigger personality.'[24] After the Calcutta riots in August 1946, following the Muslim League's eventual rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan and call for 'direct action' to achieve Pakistan, Mahatma Gandhi maintained that Wavell's state of mind had been 'unnerved owing to the Bengal tragedy.'[25] The complaints against Wavell did not fall on deaf ears; much as the British government wanted to protect the rights of the minorities, the agreement of the majority Congress Party was essential; if Wavell had alienated Congress, it was going to make obtaining their agreement even harder.

Wavell's relationship with Attlee had also soured. After the Cabinet Mission's return, Attlee had suggested to Wavell that he might appoint a political adviser to assist him in the same way that a Prime Minister needed to be advised on military matters by the chiefs of staff. 'Politics has its own technique which can only be acquired by practice and not from text books,' he informed the Viceroy.[26] Instead of appreciating the proposal, Wavell had taken exception to it. 'I do not lay claim to any great measure of political wisdom but I do know something now of politics and politicians in India and the East.' It was at this time that he gave Attlee the straw at which the Prime Minister would grasp when finally he wrote his 31 January letter of dismissal. Not for the first time, Wavell offered to resign. 'I took up my present position as a war appointment, since the then Prime Minister judged, rightly or wrongly, that it was where I could best serve the war effort. I have no personal ambition, I have already reached a position far above my expectations or merits, and I have no desire except to serve the State to the best of my ability.' He went on to admit that he realized that both Attlee and the government 'may feel that you would rather have a politician than a soldier at the head of India at present; and if you wish to recommend to His Majesty to make a change, I shall of course accept your decision without any question.'[27]

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Attlee appeared surprised by Wavell's reaction and replied in a short letter which Wavell considered inadequate. 'From your silence on the matter, I assume that you wish me to remain in my present post,' he wrote again at the end of August. But in order to do so he insisted that it was 'essential that I should know your mind more fully as regards India.'[28] Attlee did not reply to this letter, although he made three drafts, assuring Wavell of his support, but he did not send them. By December, when Wavell was once more in London for further discussions with the Indian political leaders, including Nehru and Jinnah, it was no longer a question of whether Attlee would replace Wavell but when.

However, although Wavell was still in London when Attlee offered the viceroyalty to Mountbatten, the Prime Minister made no mention to Wavell of his impending dismissal. With no particular initial enthusiasm, Mountbatten accepted on condition that he remain on the active list of the Royal Navy and had greater freedom of action to negotiate with the Indian political leaders than his predecessors.[29] When later Wavell realized that Mountbatten had been offered the viceroyalty in December, he was forced to conclude that 'Attlee's assurances of support at that time and subsequent letters were completely insincere.'[30] At the same time, he acknowledged that 'Dickie's personality might achieve what I have failed to do.'[31] Although Wavell was undoubtedly hurt by the summary nature of his dismissal ('I have been sacked,' he told the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck 'as if I were a cook')[32], in view of the sensitive political situation in India, he assured Attlee in a telegram that he would not make capital out of his dismissal in the press. 'The last thing which I wish is that my replacement should become subject of party controversy. You may of course rest assured that I shall do nothing that will embarrass my successor in his difficult task and shall do all I can to assure him welcome.'[33] His forbearance reached the ears of King George VI, who made sure that his Private Secretary wrote to Wavell thanking him for the 'extremely generous references' he had made publicly regarding Mountbatten's appointment.[34]

Polite though Wavell was about Mountbatten as his successor, in further correspondence he refused to submit to the schedule for his

return to England. The initial proposal was that Mountbatten should arrive in Karachi on the morning of Sunday 14 March and that Wavell should meet him there that day to 'have a talk'. Mountbatten would then fly on to Delhi the following day, and the aircraft would return immediately to Karachi to take Wavell back to England. Mountbatten would be sworn in as soon as Wavell had left. Wavell considered this arrangement to be unsatisfactory and saw 'no reason' why the procedure followed when he had taken over from the outgoing Viceroy in 1943, Lord Linlithgow, should be altered: 'I arrived at Delhi one day, had a talk that afternoon and evening with Linlithgow, who left next morning.'[35] On this matter, Wavell got his way. He also managed to secure an extra week in order to give him and his family more time to organize their departure. And Wavell scored a minor victory over Attlee. When the Prime Minister announced Wavell's replacement in the House of Commons on 20 February, instead of stating that his war appointment had 'expired', he was obliged to say that it was being 'terminated'.

Wavell left New Delhi for the last time on 23 March 1947. He showed no rancour in his farewell broadcast in which he conceded that although he might have made mistakes, he had always tried to work for 'the welfare of Indian's inhabitants and for the advancement of India towards self-rule . . . you have hard, dangerous and difficult years ahead, but you will overcome them.'[36] Despite his alleged unsuitability to deal with Indians, which Attlee noted, and his failure to bring India to independence, the praise of those like Azad who knew how hard he had tried was genuine: 'I cannot help a feeling of regret that Lord Wavell, who was the instigator of a new chapter in the history of relations between India and England, is retiring from the scene.'[37]

In Hindsight

Sixty years after Wavell's dismissal as Viceroy, the subject remains relevant to scholars of Britain's transfer of power in India. Inevitably his curtailed viceroyalty begs the question: what if he had remained? Would his dogged determination have enabled the subcontinent to remain united? Would he have brought forward the date of Britain's

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historic transfer of power in India? Even if there had been partition, would Wavell have seen the danger of allowing the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir to become a bone of contention? Would the border issue and the migration of approximately ten million people have been better handled? Would communal violence have been so great, causing the death of approximately one million people? What is Wavell's viceregal legacy? Although revisionist history is invariably tantalizingly roseate and simplistic, it is appropriate to put Wavell's dismissal in the context of the problems which arose from Britain's transference of power in August 1947, if only to examine the prevailing belief among many that, had he remained as Viceroy, the outcome would have been different. Although all conclusions are based on conjecture, some reasonable assumptions can be made.

Unity or Partition, and When?

What is clear from the tortuous negotiations during Wavell's viceroyalty is that by early 1947 it was going to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a committed agreement from both major political parties to the Cabinet Mission plan, which they had both accepted and then rejected. Whereas the Muslim League had recognized the advantages of grouping certain contiguous Muslim majority areas (Punjab, Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province, Balochistan in the west, and Bengal and Assam in the east), from the Congress Party's point of view, such powerful Muslim-dominated enclaves would threaten any authority they might establish at the centre. As Nehru had made clear in August 1946, 'everybody outside the Muslim League was entirely opposed to grouping.'[38] With tempers running high, the demand for Pakistan resonating and no other acceptable proposal for power-sharing on the table, it is likely that even had Wavell remained as Viceroy, partition of the subcontinent would have taken place. Even Wavell, when questioned by Attlee on his return from India in March 1947, had suggested that if, after trying to make one final effort to bring all the parties together, they failed, then 'the government should seriously consider arrangements for partition.'[39]

However, even if Wavell had been given the mandate to partition India, would he have agreed to advance Britain's departure to August 1947? When he attempted to put a time limit on Britain's presence in India, he suggested the British should depart by 31 March 1948; this proposed timeframe was not only endorsed by the Prime Minister but put back still further. When on 20 February, in addition to informing the House of Commons of Wavell's replacement, Attlee announced Britain's 'definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands', he suggested the date should be 'not later than' June 1948. When this date was first suggested, the division of the country, which could be expected to require even more time, did not as yet feature in any calculations for withdrawal.

A change of Viceroy meant a change of tactics, and much as Mountbatten's personality did serve to break the deadlock, he became susceptible to other considerations. Of these, the leverage which the Congress Party was able to exert over India's entry into the Commonwealth as a Dominion, provided there was an 'early' transfer of power, appeared to supersede other issues. Although subsequently the deteriorating law and order situation was widely used by Mountbatten's apologists to explain Britain's rapid departure, the issue of the Commonwealth ranks high in explaining why he brought the date forward to August 1947.[40] As he was later reported as saying: 'The Commonwealth meant so much to me, and with this emotional background I began to grasp at every straw in the right direction.'[41] The date chosen in August was first mentioned during the press conference which Mountbatten gave on 4 June 1947, following the announcement of the partition plan. Having made it plain that the transfer of power would now be in 1947, not in 1948, Mountbatten went on to say that the transfer could be 'about the 15th of August.'[42] Henceforward this date became an accepted reality and the Indian Independence Act was rushed through in July before Parliament recessed. Additional pressure on this revised timetable of departure was compounded by the fact that what was originally meant to be an interim date for both India and Pakistan to join the Commonwealth as Dominions then became the final date of Britain's transference of authority. For the remainder of the period

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until June 1948 the intention was that Mountbatten would retain a figurehead, supervisory role as Governor-General of both new independent countries.[43] However, an unforeseen factor was Jinnah's rejection of Mountbatten as Governor-General of Pakistan; as a result, when the unthinkable occurred—war between the two new dominions—he could not play the role of 'honest broker.'[44] From the British government's point of view in London, there were certain advantages to the new timetable: an early departure enabled Britain to divest itself of its responsibility for India sooner than originally planned at a time when its attention was also focused on the Middle East. In addition, as Mountbatten later boasted, disengaging from India sooner rather than later, meant that Britain was able to depart without a single British life lost.

On the assumption that Wavell, with the concurrence of the British government in London, had also managed to come to an agreement with the Indian leaders, the critically important question is whether he would have let himself be manoeuvred into the position of foreshortening Britain's departure. If one considers that he would likewise have brought the date forward, then events are likely to have unfolded as they did; if one adopts the alternative view that, given his past unwillingness, as exhibited during his military career, to be coerced by considerations other than logistical requirements, the answer is probably not. Rather, he would have been more likely to have argued in favour of retaining the latitude provided by the original timetable, which he had originally authored, whilst trying to seek an alternative benefit regarding membership of the Commonwealth. Provided he had received the necessary support from London and from the political parties in India, this timetable could have prevailed. Furthermore, with his more cautious even-handed approach, he may well have realized that compressing Britain's departure into a few months left some dangerous loose ends.

Kashmir

The most explosive loose end was the future status of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which had all the components to generate a long-standing quarrel: as a princely state geographically

contiguous to both new dominions, the headwaters of the river Indus, essential to irrigate what was to become the divided Punjab flowed through the state; it had a majority Muslim population, but a Hindu ruler, the Maharaja Hari Singh, who neither subscribed to Nehru's socialist ideals nor to the 'two nation' theory of Muslims and Hindus requiring separate states, espoused by Jinnah. According to Britain's agreement with the various princes, it was up to them to decide their future allegiance rather than having the state's future determined by a vote of the people. After first attempting to remain independent, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir eventually agreed that his state should join India in October 1947. However, his accession to India was (and still is) contested by Pakistan and a large number of its inhabitants.[45]

While both countries would certainly have made their respective claims on Kashmir, a settlement could have been effected prior to independence if there had been more time to negotiate it. As the Maharaja's son, Karan Singh, observed, his father may possibly have been persuaded to adopt the same principle as was used to partition British India, that of apportioning Muslim majority areas to Pakistan and Hindu/non-Muslim majority areas to India.[46] Alternatively, he may have decided to make a formal accession to one or other dominion, which, if enacted while Britain remained in supreme authority, would have been less contestable. Most importantly, had the outbreak of hostilities been contained while Britain retained its presence prior to the division of the Indian army, the outcome might have been more equitable than a sixty year dispute, which has not been fully resolved and has cost thousands of lives and billions of rupees.

As a corollary, had a war not commenced over Kashmir within two months of independence, the character of partition might have been very different. There could have been an executive separation, which, although more formalized than the federal structure envisaged by the Cabinet Mission plan, would have allowed for cross border contact as to be expected from people with so many shared cultural, linguistic and religious traditions. This was certainly what the British government, in their pre-independence studies of the implications of partition, visualized. In one such analysis carried out in London in

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April 1946, the point was made that it would be essential for both India and Pakistan to have 'a common strategy, a common military administration and a common higher concern.'[47] Right up to the final agreement on partition, even having conceded Pakistan, Mountbatten was attempting to preserve some overall unity (as might have been retained if he had been retained as Governor-General of both new Dominions). When viewed in retrospect, the creation of 'Pakistan' in two wings—West and East—separated by hundreds of miles of Indian territory, is illogical without the prospect that there would be harmonious relations with the territory of India in between. The testimony to this conviction is that many families initially thought that they would be able to return to their former homes even if they had opted for nationhood of the other country.[48] Like European nation states in the present day, without a *casus belli* lodged between the two countries, there was no reason why the frontiers of divided India could not have been permanently 'soft', retaining at the very least pre-independence economic collaboration.

The New Frontiers and Mass Migration

Finally, if one follows through the hypothesis that had Wavell remained as Viceroy, Britain's departure would not have been foreshortened and yet there would still have been partition, the other aspect which requires examination is the drawing of the new frontiers of India. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the lawyer entrusted with the task, had to accomplish the division of the provinces of Punjab and Bengal in a matter of weeks. He had no knowledge of the country and no time to visit the areas that he was dividing. Had there been more time, he could have made a better assessment of exactly where the boundary was to lie; as a result, although partition was bound to cause grief to those immediately affected on the ground, some of the more painful divisions might have been avoided.

However, even had Wavell remained as Viceroy, lengthier timeframe or not, it is probable that the border would have followed the general lines it did in both the Punjab and Bengal. This was because 'Pakistan' had effectively been demarcated in February 1946 when Wavell was requested by Pethick-Lawrence to send his

recommendations as regards 'genuinely Moslem areas if we are compelled to give a decision on this.'[49] The initiative to demarcate Pakistan had originally been Wavell's not because he wanted to concede it, but because he hoped, as part of his 'breakdown plan' outlining Britain's withdrawal, that if the leaders of the Muslim League realized how comparatively small any 'Pakistan' award would be, they would work harder to resolve their differences with the Congress Party in order to remain in a united India. 'It is possible that such an award might bring about agreement between Congress and the League, so that the Constitution would be made sufficiently attractive to Muslims to induce them to remain in the Federation from the start; and this would certainly be the best solution,' he wrote to Pethick-Lawrence in December 1945.[50] Initially, the British government preferred to keep the situation fluid on the grounds that such delineation would tend to preclude 'any other solution of the Hindu-Moslem question.'[51] However, prior to the departure of the Cabinet Mission to Delhi in early 1946, Pethick-Lawrence had agreed to have a draft version of what might constitute Pakistan.

Much as Wavell wanted to be even-handed with both the Congress Party and the Muslim League, he did not support Jinnah's original demand for entire Muslim majority provinces in the north-west and north-east to be allotted to Pakistan; rather he considered that, if Pakistan were to be conceded, it would be necessary to partition the provinces of the Punjab and Bengal on the basis of which areas had Muslim majorities. In the west Wavell had suggested that Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province, Balochistan, and the Rawalpindi-Multan and Lahore division of the Punjab would be included; in the east, Bengal and Assam excluding those areas which did not have Muslim majorities. But he also believed that other circumstances might cause an exception to this general principle and he was already worrying about the possibility of 'grave trouble' from the Sikhs who predominated in the Punjab and for whom no 'homeland' was being allocated. He therefore believed that the district of Gurdaspur, which, with its marginal Muslim majority might have been expected to be allocated to Pakistan (and subsequently was in the notional award), ought to remain in India because for 'geographical reasons' it should

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go with Amritsar; this, 'being sacred city of Sikhs must stay out of Pakistan.'[52]

The idea that Radcliffe had no access to these suggestions but instead worked in seclusion is highly questionable.[53] When the final partition plan was drawn up, Gurdaspur district was considered in relation to its four '*tahsils*': although the western Muslim majority *tahsil* of Shakargarh was allocated to Pakistan, the other two Muslim majority *tahsils* of Batala and Gurdaspur, together with the Hindu majority *tahsil* of Pathankot, were awarded to India. Contrary to current thinking amongst many Pakistanis (and some British authors), who believe that the award of most of Gurdaspur to India was a deception orchestrated by Mountbatten while Radcliffe was drawing the border to benefit India's access to the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, the idea of allocating Gurdaspur to India clearly originated during Wavell's viceroyalty and not during Mountbatten's. And, amongst British civil servants, the suggestion was considered fair. As Christopher Beaumont, secretary to the Partition Council later wrote: 'It is true that the Batala and Gurdaspur Tahsils had a slight Muslim majority, but the Muslims were concentrated in the towns and most of the land was cultivated by Hindus and Sikhs.' As Beaumont maintained, at the time, the land access Gurdaspur provided to the state of Jammu and Kashmir was not a consideration. 'Kashmir was beyond Radcliffe's brief. I do not believe that it ever entered into his calculations.'[54] Had Wavell remained as Viceroy, in the final disposition of the border, there is no doubt that most of Gurdaspur would still have been awarded to India. Whilst the people living in the region may have reconciled themselves to the award, the issue has remained contentious because of the belief, as stated above, that its award was meant to disadvantage Pakistan in relation to Kashmir.

The decision taken by Mountbatten on 9 August 1947 to suppress announcement of the new frontiers so that the independence celebrations would not be spoilt, also exacerbated the suffering. Would Wavell have chosen to follow the advice of the Reforms Commissioner V.P. Menon, as Mountbatten had done, and wait until after independence to announce the award or would he, as a soldier, have publicized it so that he could make the necessary arrangements

to safeguard the region while he still had the authority?[55] Given his military experience of what a withdrawal entailed, it would have perhaps been inherent in his nature, regardless of the consequences, to insist on demarcating the border before Britain's departure rather than leaving it to the new dominions to sort out in the chaotic aftermath of their independence. His 'breakdown' plan specifically provided for a military withdrawal into the north-west and north-east where there was the greatest likelihood of trouble.[56] Unlike Mountbatten, Wavell had also witnessed the dire effect of communal violence at first hand when he visited Bengal during the Calcutta riots in 1946; he knew therefore better than Mountbatten the carnage which could ensue. Whether Wavell as Viceroy would have been any more adept at controlling the mass migration is difficult to assess. No one anticipated that quite so many millions would leave their homes in fear of their lives and that so many thousands would be killed before they reached their destination. The communal massacres which engulfed the subcontinent were unprecedented.[57] But as noted above, Wavell was conscious of the dangerous mood of the Sikhs. Yet again, the time factor is important. During a lengthier gradual departure, the passions which were aroused might have subsided or been kept in check in their various locations while Britain remained in overall control.

In conclusion, had Wavell remained as Viceroy during the transfer of power, he might not have averted partition, but the character of that partition could have been more compliant had Britain's departure not been so speedy and Kashmir not been left as a contested issue between the new independent countries of India and Pakistan. It is more difficult to determine the extent to which Wavell would have been able to alleviate the suffering of the millions who migrated or control the communal killings but one can perhaps assume that a staged departure would have enabled greater control and assistance. Wavell was not impressed by showmanship or political appearances. During the deliberations about Pakistan, he had maintained that it was 'embarrassing and not really honest' to concede Pakistan without demarcating it; likewise, he would probably have made sure that the inhabitants of the new dominions knew exactly where the frontiers

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were going to lie, even if it meant that the celebrations at independence were less joyful.

Wavell's Viceregal Legacy

Mountbatten's name has gone down in history as the last Viceroy, one who presided over Britain's departure from the subcontinent and who gave India and Pakistan their independence. He has been both applauded and denigrated for his achievement. But, as is now widely suggested, his role can also be viewed as constituting the necessary 'lubricant of imperial withdrawal.'[58] That he was able to accomplish the task so speedily, albeit with tragic consequences, was due to the groundwork which had been laid by Wavell, who, even before formally assuming the viceroyalty was visualizing 'the prospect of an India at peace with herself, a partner in our great Commonwealth of Nations, mother of a prosperous people, a shield for peace in the East, a busy market for trade, and yet with sufficient leisure to develop art and poetry and thought, the real mainsprings of life to which India has already contributed so much to the world.'[59] Starting with the Simla Conference in 1945, Wavell had attempted to put into effect this vision at the same time as making sure that the Indian people never again experienced the devastating famine of 1943. As Maulana Azad noted, Winston Churchill had put India's future in cold storage. By insisting on inviting the Indian political leaders to discuss their future at Simla, Wavell opened the door. And although he failed to preside over a reconciliation of viewpoints between the Congress Party and the Muslim League, the Simla Conference marked 'a breakwater in Indian political history. This was the first time when negotiations failed, not on the basic political issue between India and Britain, but on the communal issue dividing different Indian groups.'[60]

That negotiations continued to fail was not Wavell's fault, but was due to the compulsions existing within both major political parties at the enactment of a once-in-a millennium phenomenon: the independence of an empire. For their different reasons, neither Churchill nor Attlee were prepared to give Wavell a firm policy; nor would they let him act as he thought fit. Over sixty years later,

Wavell's summary dismissal can almost be seen as taking place to conceal the fact that Attlee and his government had rejected his advice and consistently weakened his position on the spurious allegation that he was not a politician. Even so, as a child of empire, Wavell's greatest achievement is that he saw sooner than most that the end had to come. His belief, which accorded with current 'establishment' thinking, was that the subcontinent should remain united; lacking instructions to the contrary, this remained his goal.

When Mountbatten assumed the viceroyalty, the accepted wisdom had changed. For the first time the members of the Congress Party were prepared to contemplate partition, whereas throughout Wavell's tenure the idea was unacceptable. The British government also had a change of heart. The will to stay on in India, while the Indian political parties continued to wrangle, had gone; as a result, Attlee found himself ironically accepting Wavell's parting words of advice: that failing agreement, he should think seriously about partition. There is no doubt, had Wavell remained as Viceroy, and retained the support of the British government as well as being given the same room for manoeuvre as Mountbatten, he could similarly have presided over the transfer of power. If, after preserving its presence in India for 200 years, he had ensured that Britain remained just a few months longer, the consequences of departure may have been less agonizing. Although Wavell was not able to finish the job he had embarked on when he assumed the viceroyalty in October 1943, his unwitting contribution was also to have given shape to Pakistan. It may not have been the greater Pakistan which Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League wanted but under Wavell's authority, what became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was outlined. In the story of India's independence, Wavell—the penultimate Viceroy—may justly be credited with playing a leading role.

Notes

1. Attlee to Wavell, 31 Jan. 1947, as quoted in *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, ed. Penderel Moon (Oxford University Press, 1973), Appendix IX, p. 497.
2. The loan was negotiated by John Maynard Keynes; originally Britain hoped to get a $5 billion interest free loan; in the end the US agreed to loan $3.75 billion at an annual rate of interest of 2 per cent, repayable in 50 instalments.

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3. Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1965) and Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948).
4. Note to Attlee by Wavell, 3 Dec. 1946, as quoted in *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, ed. Penderel Moon (Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 387.
5. Wavell's Breakdown Plan was formulated in the event negotiations did 'break down' irrevocably. However many commentators believe that it has been misunderstood. As Penderel Moon suggests, it should have been used as a means of putting pressure on the Congress Party. 'With the plan to fall back on HMG and the Viceroy could have negotiated from strength instead of weakness.' Moon to George Abell, 3 Dec. 1972, private collection.
6. Attlee as quoted in *A Prime Minister Remembers* (Heinemann, 1961), p. 209.
7. 'Future Policy in India', India and Burma Committee, 6 Jan. 1947, *Transfer of Power*, IX, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1979), pp. 475–77. It is also clear that Attlee was greatly influenced by Stafford Cripps, see Peter Clarke, *The Cripps Version* (Allen Lane, 2002), pp. 470–1.
8. Attlee, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, p. 209. However, as H.V. Hodson makes clear 'It is false to deduce from Lord Attlee's recollection that he alone made the choice in a flash.' *The Great Divide*, Hutchinson & Co, 1969, p. 191. Not everyone applauded the choice of Mountbatten: the conservative opposition regarded him as an 'aristocratic playboy' who had 'sold out' on Burma. Later Earl Mountbatten of Burma, KG, GCB, OM, GCSI, GCIE, GCVO, DSO, PC, FRS, (1900–79).
9. Attlee as quoted in *A Prime Minister Remembers*, p. 209. In Jan. 1946, Pethick-Lawrence had passed on to Attlee a message from former Vicereine Lady Willingdon suggesting Mountbatten as a future Viceroy. Pethick-Lawrence to Attlee, 30 Jan. 1946, *Transfer of Power* VI, ed. Nicholas Mansergh, HMSO, 1976, p. 87.
10. Attlee to Bevin, 2 Jan. 1947, *Transfer of Power*, IX, ed. Nicholas Mansergh, (HMSO, 1980), p. 445.
11. George Abell, 8 Aug. 1950, private collection.
12. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1988), p. 113.
13. Mountbatten to King George VI, 4 Jan. 1947, *Transfer of Power*, IX, ed. Nicholas Mansergh, (HMSO, 1980), p. 453.
14. *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, 12 Jan. 1947, ed. Penderel Moon, p. 410.
15. Cripps to Mountbatten, 28 Jan. 1947, *Transfer of Power*, IX, ed. Nicholas Mansergh, (HMSO, 1980), p. 569. Rt Hon Sir Stafford Cripps, PC, FRS, KC, JP, MP, (1889–1952).
16. Wavell to Attlee, 5 Feb. 1947, as quoted in *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, ed. Penderel Moon, Appendix IX, p. 498. Churchill had told Wavell that he wished to be free to appoint another Viceroy after three years, but that he hoped it would not be necessary. *Moon*, fn.1, pp. 498, 351, *Transfer of Power*, IX, p. 624.
17. Churchill, Parliamentary Proceedings, 20 Feb. 1947, as quoted in *The Statesman*, 22 Feb. 1947. See Victoria Schofield, *Wavell: Soldier and Statesman*, (John Murray, 2006), pp. 372–3.
18. Penderel Moon, *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal* (OUP, 1973), p. 453.
19. Attlee to Pethick-Lawrence, 22 Dec. 1945, *Transfer of Power*, XII, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1983), pp. 797–8.

20. Pethick-Lawrence to Attlee, 26 Dec. 1945, *Transfer of Power*, XII, ed. Nicholas Mansergh, (HMSO, 1983), p. 799.
21. *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, 2 April 1946, ed. Penderel Moon, p. 234.
22. *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, Epilogue, ed. Penderel Moon, p. 458.
23. Peter Clarke, *The Cripps Version*, (Allen Lane, 2002), p. 455. At the end of June he suggested the possibility of Mountbatten becoming Viceroy. *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, Epilogue, ed. Penderel Moon, p. 458, fn.1.
24. Ghosh to Cripps, 5 Nov. 1946, CAB 127/129, The National Archives as quoted in Clarke, *The Cripps Version*, (Allen Lane, 2002), p. 470.
25. See Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, (India: Jaico Publishing House, 1961), pp. 46–7; India Office Records (IOR) now Asian and African Studies, The British Library MSS EUR A221 and Read & Fisher, *The Proudest Day* (Pimlico, 1998), p. 398.
26. Attlee to Wavell, 22 Jul. 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, ed. Nicholas Mansergh(HMSO, 1979), pp. 99–101.
27. Wavell to Attlee, 1 Aug. 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1979), p. 167–68.
28. Wavell to Attlee, 28 Aug. 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VIII, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1979), p. 271.
29. Mountbatten's old-age recollections that he was given 'plenipotentiary' powers are considered to be an exaggeration. See Patrick French, *Liberty or Death* (Harper Collins, 1997), p. 278 and Peter Clarke, *The Cripps Version*, 'It is likely that some assurance was sought of the need for latitude on the part of the Viceroy and for confidence on the part of the Govt.' p. 471.
30. Wavell, 22 Mar. 1947, *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, ed. Penderel Moon, p. 432.
31. Wavell, 13 Feb. 1947, *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, ed. Penderel Moon, p. 419.
32. Wavell to Auchinleck, as recorded by Shahid Hamid, 8 Feb. 1947, *Disastrous Twilight* (Leo Cooper, 1986), p. 133.
33. Wavell to Attlee, 21 Feb. 1947, *Transfer of Power*, IX, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1980), p. 779.
34. Sir A. Lascelles to Wavell, 30 Mar. 1947, as quoted in Wheeler-Bennett, *King George VI* (Macmillan, 1958), pp. 712–13.
35. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, Mountbatten collection, IOR, now Asian and African Studies, British Library, MSS EUR F200/176.
36. Wavell, Farewell Broadcast, All India Radio, New Delhi, 21 Mar. 1947, *Transfer of Power*, IX, ed. Nicholas Mansergh, (HMSO, 1980), p. 1003–4.
37. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1988), p. 192.
38. Nehru, Statement of 10 Jul. 1946 as quoted in *The Indian Annual Register*, (1946), vol. II, pp. 145–7.
39. *Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 434. I do not subscribe to the view, as expressed by Narenda Sarila Singh in *The Shadow of the Great Game, The Untold Story of Partition* (Constable, 2006), that throughout his Viceroyalty, Wavell was working to partition the subcontinent for strategic reasons. This argument is based on conjecture and on documents which express a view of Pakistan post-partition. Although some British officers were sympathetic to the idea of Pakistan, their

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views did not express the government's belief that Britain's interests would be better served by keeping the subcontinent united. Prior to independence, all analyses on Pakistan were predicated on the belief that even if there had to be an executive/administrative separation, there would be a commonality of interest with India. See 'Defence Implications of a Partition of India into Pakistan and Hindustan,' and 'Appreciation of the Defence Problems of Pakistan', IOR, now Asian and African Studies, British Library, L/WS/1/1029.

40. See Reed & Fisher, *The Proudest Day* (Pimlico, 1998), pp. 422, 444 for the role played by V.P. Menon and Sardar Patel. See also Narenda Sarila Singh, *The Shadow of the Great Game, The Untold Story of Partition*, p. 291. Initially it was felt that membership of the Commonwealth could be a temporary status with the decision finalized at the definitive transfer of power in 1948.
41. Mountbatten, as quoted in Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994), p. 91.
42. Why Mountbatten chose 15 August 1947 (the second anniversary of the surrender of Japan), is relevant only insofar as it concerns not adhering to the longer time frame.
43. See H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide* (Hutchinson, 1969), who states that for a while Nehru continued to believe that there would be an interim transfer of power on August 1947 with a genuine demission in June 1948, p. 308.
44. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine Mountbatten's partisan approach as Governor-General of India during the first Kashmir War 1947–49.
45. See Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire* (IB Tauris, 1996), pp. 146–9 for analysis of the controversy surrounding the Maharaja's accession to India.
46. Karan Singh, *Heir Apparent* (Oxford, 1982), p. 53.
47. 'Defence Implications of a Partition of India', 3 Apr. 1946, IOR, now Asian and African Studies, British Library, L/WS/1/1029.
48. This information comes from countless interviews conducted in India and Pakistan over thirty years' research. Some Indians were expecting (and hoping) that Pakistan would fail and that the regions allocated to Pakistan would be re-absorbed into a greater India.
49. Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 29 Jan. 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VI, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1976), p. 860.
50. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 27 Dec. 1945, *Transfer of Power*, VI, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1976), pp. 700–1.
51. Pethick-Lawrence, 'Memorandum', 10 Jan. 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VI, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1976), p. 761.
52. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 7 Feb. 1946, *Transfer of Power*, VI, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1976), p. 912,
53. When Professor Zaidi, editor of the *Jinnah Papers*, met Radcliffe and asked to see his archival papers, he said he had destroyed them 'to keep the validity of the award'. Zaidi to Schofield, Apr. 1994.
54. Beaumont to Schofield, 17 Oct. 1995. He went on to say: 'although Pakistanis, with whom I have had much correspondence, will never believe this.' When Beaumont said Mountbatten interfered with the drawing of the border, this was in relation to the award of Ferozepur and Zira *tahsils* on the east side of the Sutlej

which Radcliffe had given to Pakistan but in the final award went to India. See Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994), p. 105, for an argument supporting the thesis that the idea to award Gurdaspur to India was Mountbatten's. It is also worth noting that the road access to the state of Jammu and Kashmir went through the predominantly Hindu majority *tahsil* of Pathankot.

55. Narenda Sarila Singh states that Mountbatten withheld the award on Menon's advice because 'the award was bound to fall short of the expectations of one or other side or both and create explosive frustrations within the two countries as well as suspicion of British intentions, which would mar the celebrations', *The Shadow of the Great Game, The Untold Story of Partition*, p. 327. H.M. Seervai insists that Mountbatten ignored the advice of Evan Jenkins who informed him that the Sikhs were intent on making trouble, *The Partition of India, Legend and Reality* (Bombay: Emmenem Publications, 1989), p. 140.
56. Patrick French maintains that there was no political will on either side of the House of Commons to reinforce India which would have been necessary if Britain had delayed its departure, *Liberty or Death* (HarperCollins, 1997), p. 289.
57. One of the reasons why the Cambridge student, Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali's early suggestion for the creation of Pakistan was rejected as 'chimerical' and 'impractical' at the Round Table Conference in the 1930s was because it would require a large transfer of people. See Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 12, fn. 14.
58. Patrick French, *Liberty or Death* (HarperCollins, 1997), p. 289.
59. Wavell, 6 Oct. 1943, *Transfer of Power*, IV, ed. Nicholas Mansergh (HMSO, 1973), p. 378.
60. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1988), p. 117.

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7

The Pre-History of a Viceroyalty? Lord Mountbatten and South East Asia Command

Ian Talbot

Academic debates continue to swirl around the Mountbatten viceroyalty with respect to such issues as its even-handedness, the timing of the transfer of power, and the extent to which personality influenced its outcomes.[1] These controversies have in recent years dominated historical writings to the exclusion of much else. They have recently been resurrected by Stanley Wolpert in his volume, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India*.[2] He portrays Mountbatten as a young man in a hurry who, because of his ignorance of India and impetuosity, committed 'catastrophic blunders'.

Was Mountbatten as ill-equipped to deal with the transfer of power as Wolpert implies? This chapter seeks to assess how his earlier experience at South East Asia Command (SEAC) influenced his role in the endgame of the British Raj. Remarkably little has been written about the continuities between these two assignments.[3] Yet it could be argued that the lessons Mountbatten brought from SEAC influenced such key features of his viceroyalty as the decision to accelerate the British departure, the close relationship with Nehru, and the concern for news management. Critics might still condemn them, but they can hardly adduce them to inexperience and ignorance.

Before addressing what might then be termed the 'prehistory' of the Mountbatten viceroyalty, it is necessary to both provide an overview of the SEAC service and to introduce the important caveat that it should not be viewed with hindsight as a mere apprenticeship for the India mission. Indeed, Mountbatten claimed that the appointment as viceroy came as a bombshell which he 'tried to avoid.'[4] Equally, one should not regard his every action in New Delhi as simply building on earlier experiences at SEAC. The decision to accelerate the transfer of power was primarily a response to mounting communal violence in North India, although I will argue that it was informed by earlier experiences dealing with challenges to European rule in South East Asia with inadequate military forces.

Mountbatten held the position of South East Asia Command 'Supremo' from the period October 1943 until May 1946. Despite his lack of seniority, he had been chosen to head an integrated command structure in South East Asia, because of his earlier experience as Chief of Combined Operations.[5] The role in Combined Operations had also enabled Mountbatten to serve on the Chief of Staffs Committee. The Combined Operations concept was a precursor of later wartime inter-service, inter-allied cooperation and of Supreme Allied Commanders. South East Asia Command (SEAC) however was to operate on a far grander scale with a vast inter-service team and intricate command structure. It was initially responsible for Burma, Ceylon, Siam, the Malay Peninsula, and Sumatra. Its headquarters shifted successively from New Delhi to Kandy and finally in the autumn of 1945 to Singapore.[6]

Mountbatten was involved as much with diplomacy as military strategy during the war years. The former was displayed most obviously in his dealings with the Chinese Nationalist leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek. Mountbatten visited Chungking in October 1943 where he made a favourable impression. Diplomacy and tact were also required in his dealings with his American Deputy Supreme Commander, General 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell and in SEAC's ambivalent operational relationship with not only British army and naval forces in the Eastern Fleet and the India Command, but the American and British Air Forces in Burma. US priorities were for air

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supply missions to China, rather than to support British forces in Burma.

Mountbatten's other main wartime energies were devoted to raising the morale of General William Slim's 'forgotten' fourteenth army. Improved medical services enabled the scourge of malaria to be combated.[7] It also made possible the continuation of military operations during the monsoon. This was in keeping with Mountbatten's 'can do' approach to leadership. Morale was also improved by Mountbatten's carefully staged visits to the Burmese front. Accessibility in disregard to personal cost, or even safety was also of course to be displayed in his later viceregal 'assignment', most notably during his visit to the North-West Frontier Province in late April 1947.

The unexpectedly swift surrender of Japan following the nuclear attacks on Hiroshama and Nagasaki, brought a new phase to the SEAC operations. Peter Dennis has documented them well in his work, *Troubled Days of Peace*.[8] The Command area was widened to include French Indo-China, south of the Sixteenth Parallel, Java, Borneo and the Celebes. Mountbatten was now de facto military ruler of the whole of South East Asia. He was responsible for a population of 128 million and territories stretching a million and a half square miles. It could be argued that such a large responsibility equipped him better for his future role as viceroy than the governorship of a handful of Indian provinces might have done. Moreover, while the tasks of the repatriation of allied prisoners of war and internees, the evacuation of surrendered Japanese personnel and the maintenance of law and order were primarily military, the environment in which they had to be carried out was intensely political. The Japanese invasion of South East Asia had not only undermined European authority, but in many instances had encouraged the growth of armed nationalist movements. The scene was set for a new phase of struggle not only in former British colonies such as Burma and Malaya, but in the Dutch East Indies and French Indo-China which now fell under Mountbatten's area of responsibility. The SEAC troops were spread very thinly on the ground and could not receive reinforcement from the US or Britain because of the political climate in these countries. Dutch and French forces were awaiting scarce shipping space from

Europe. Troops were available from India, but their use to suppress fellow Asian nationalist forces became increasingly sensitive. Hence there was a need for 'the continued employment, months after the Japanese surrender of Japanese troops for the purpose of maintaining law and order.'[9] There could have been no more salutary lesson of the limitations imposed by European military weakness in the face of resurgent Asian nationalism.

Mountbatten had political advisors in the form of Civil Affairs Officers to lean on, in this fraught and dangerous situation for his Command. The post of Chief Civil Affairs Officer was equivalent to that of Governor-General. John Springhall has recently revealed the tensions between Major General Herbert Ralph Hone, who was CCAO for Malaya and Singapore and Mountbatten over the issue of preventive arrest and expulsion of Chinese communists.[10] Many of these were Chinese former anti-Japanese fighters. Mountbatten sought to win them over to the British side, even going so far as to award a number the Burma Star in a ceremony in Singapore on 6 January 1946.[11] He was reluctant to expel the probable organizers of serious demonstrations in Singapore on 15 February 1946, despite the entreaties of his military advisors. Mountbatten maintained that such action would lead to charges of 'fascist dictatorship' against the British Military Administration of Malaya and Singapore. When he visited New Delhi on 8 March 1946, he sought Wavell's advice and used this to bolster his dislike of arbitrary deportations. The Indian viceroy was of the view that it was not part of the BMA's duties to 'interfere with long-term political aspects'[12].

Better documented are Mountbatten's differences with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, the conservative governor of Burma. The Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia encountered problems, however, not only in areas of former British rule after the Japanese surrender, but in the French and Dutch territories. The imperial reassertion from The Hague was frequently out of touch with the rapidly shifting ground realities. To make matters worse there were no reliable intelligence sources in the former Dutch territories. The Dutch were unaware of the strength of the nationalist forces in Java until after the Japanese surrender. London gave equivocal guidance on the extent to which British troops should intervene in conflicts between indigenous

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nationalists and the returning European rulers. Mountbatten thus had to work out his own response to the challenge of Asian nationalism in the post-surrender period in the Netherlands East Indies and South Indo-China. It might best be regarded as a liberal approach which was influenced by both short term considerations of European weakness and longer term perspectives of maintaining influence with the rulers of free Asian countries. Mountbatten later took this response with him to India where it was largely to serve him well and to chime in with the outlook of the Attlee administration.

Mountbatten's Response to Asian Nationalism

We shall turn first, however, to Mountbatten's response to Asian nationalism with respect to Burma.[13] Its situation was different from that of both the Dutch and French possessions in that a long military struggle had preceded the Japanese surrender. Furthermore, the country was not regarded as a crucial centre of imperial power. A White Paper that coincided with the reoccupation of Rangoon in May 1945 publicly committed the British to eventual self-rule, but without setting a timetable. Common to the situation of Burma, the Dutch East Indies and French Indo-China was the issue of the returning European rulers' relationship with nationalist forces which had grown in influence during the period of Japanese occupation.

Mountbatten, in a foretaste of his later Indian stance, looked to forge relationships with future ruling nationalist leaders even at the expense of wartime allies and loyalists. This policy led to clashes with Burma's Governor Reginald Dorman-Smith who had spent the Japanese occupation period in exile at Simla. 'Being a Governor with no country to govern has been a quaint but not a very satisfying experience', he remarked.[14] Mountbatten later recalled that, 'At one time Dorman-Smith even admitted to me that he was trying to form a rival political party to Aung San's so that there would be a decent party to turn over power to when dominion status was granted. I pointed out to him the danger of forming a "Governor's Party" . . . and that if he did that and continued to antagonize the only man who could possibly be the Prime Minister of a Free Burma, Burma would inevitably leave the Commonwealth.'[15] Mountbatten, as much a

newcomer to Burma as he was to be later in India, felt no personal loyalty to former allies of the colonial state whether these were drawn from minority hill tribes or representatives from the traditional elites such as Sir Paw Tun and Sir Htoon Aung Gyaw who had been in Simla with Dorman-Smith.

Mountbatten's decision to rearm the Burma National Army (BNA) and to establish a rapport with its leader Aung San was however controversial not only for Dorman-Smith and the Burmese colonial administration, but in Whitehall and Downing Street. The Japanese had established the BNA in 1942 as a collaborationist force. It had switched sides in the wake of Japanese defeats. Unsurprisingly many Civil Affairs Officers regarded its leaders as 'unstable' and 'treacherous.'[16] Mountbatten blocked their attempts to charge Aung San with war crimes. He also went over the head of the Burmese Commander-in-Chief, Sir Oliver Leese with respect to the BNA's rearmament. This decision could be justified on operational grounds. In reality, it reflected Mountbatten's broader political strategy. He noted in his diary that he was completely on the BNA side, while Britain's traditional allies in Burma were 'nonentities.'[17] This policy was endorsed by Major-General Rance who was Mountbatten's Chief Civil Affairs Officer in Burma.

The BNA was less militarily useful than had been at first anticipated by the Special Operations Executive in the Far East, Force 136. Did Mountbatten's political relationship with the Burmese nationalists prevent the conflict that was to later engulf the French and Dutch Empires in South East Asia? Mountbatten later claimed that Aung San's electoral success justified his strategy. It might be as much argued that Mountbatten's willingness to do business with him had bolstered his authority. Aung San's assassination meant that the hopes that both Mountbatten and Slim vested in him as a future Smuts could never be tested in the long term. Mountbatten was firmly of the opinion, however, that Burma would not have left the Commonwealth if the military administration's policy towards Aung San had been continued by Dorman-Smith when he took over the authority.[18] There had been considerable tension between him and Dorman-Smith over the latter's demand for a prompt return to civilian rule in Burma. Nevertheless, this had been in keeping with

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the British Government's outlook to which Mountbatten reluctantly bowed. Moreover, as Nicholas Tarling has revealed, the governor's policy of wanting to avoid a one party government in Burma and of taking a tough line with Aung San had Cabinet approval.[19]

Mountbatten adopted a similar policy in Malaya to Burma. Reoccupation was not to be accompanied by the bolstering of traditional allies who had been discredited, but by cooperation with nationalist forces. As we have already seen, this lead to conflicts with his more hard-line advisors over the issues of preventive detention and deportation from Singapore of communist sympathizers. In the event this strategy of attempted co-option of the Malayan Communist Party was rapidly abandoned. Mountbatten had controversially called for permission to rearm the Malayan Anti-Japanese Resistance Movement in May 1945. This force was to form the core of the later Chinese communist insurgency. During his military administration, he had also raised the issue that the Sultans, who had collaborated with the Japanese, should not be reinstated. Work was already underway, however, in the Eastern Department of the Colonial Office, for a scheme envisaging a Malayan Union.

Mountbatten's belief that the colonial clock could not be turned back guided his responses to the situation in the Dutch East Indies and French Indo-China as much as it had done in Burma and Malaya. The even greater scarcity of troops on the ground in these latter situations lent a powerful operational imperative to this liberal principle. Mountbatten was at pains to point this out, for example, to the senior Dutch officials Dr Van Mook and Admiral Helfrich at a special meeting to discuss the situation in the Netherlands East Indies held at Government House Singapore on 6 December 1945. The Supreme Allied Commander reported that the only British Division in SEAC was already committed to send one brigade to Hong Kong and one to Japan. The Congress demand for the withdrawal of Indian troops, meant 'there was a very definite time limit to the period during which (they) could continue to be employed in the Netherlands East Indies.'[20]

The British response to the military ground realities both in the Netherlands East Indies and in French Indo-China was to urge Dutch and French officials to enter into a dialogue with nationalist

movements. Nevertheless, in both situations, British Indian troops were drawn into conflict with nationalists. Indeed, forces under the command of Major General Douglas Gracey were to play a crucial role in wresting control of Saigon from the Viet Minh on 23 September 1945, just six days after they had proclaimed an independent Republic. Gracey justified his action to Mountbatten in terms of the maintenance of law and order. His directive had been merely to secure control of the Japanese forces. The reinstallation of French power led to excesses which undermined their relations with the Viet Minh. Mountbatten, along with Slim, urged General Jacques-Philippe Leclerc, Commander of the French Forces in the Far East, to advise the French government to draw on the British experience in Burma. Dialogue with the nationalists along with the offer of Dominion status, he maintained, had defused a potentially dangerous situation. Leclerc was unimpressed by the Dominion status argument and communicated to De Gaulle his belief that the situation was not analogous to Burma.

The lack of adequate French troops raised the possibility that British forces could be drawn into conflict with the Viet Minh if the French proved intransigent. British talks with the Viet Minh representatives at the beginning of October paved the way for a ceasefire and a meeting between French officials and the Viet Minh. Mountbatten called on his own political officer Brigadier E.C.J. Myers to assess the situation. He reported that the old French administration was 'rotten to the core' and if they did not act with urgency they would create a 'running sore' that would last for years.[21] Throughout the closing months of 1945, Gracey was involved in military actions against the Viet Minh which he was forced to justify to Mountbatten. Leclerc, as his own forces increased in number, pursued a military strategy designed to reassert the French ruling presence. The British were relieved to pass full military responsibility to the French in January 1946. The final British Indian troops under Gracey's command, the 2nd battalion, 8th Punjab regiment departed, its colours flying on 26 March. Just a fortnight earlier, SEAC had relinquished administrative control over southern Indo-China.

Mountbatten could encourage both Leclerc and Gracey to enter into dialogue with the Viet Minh, but he could not cajole them.

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SEAC's remit did not extend to the imposition of constitutional reform. From the British Foreign Office perspective, good relations with France were more important than accommodating the Vietnamese nationalists. Mountbatten remained convinced, however, that a negotiated settlement was infinitely more preferable than resorting to force.

The struggle between the forces of anti-colonial nationalism and the returning European power was most intense in the Dutch East Indies, the last major responsibility of Mountbatten's SEAC command. In later years, Mountbatten suggested that he alone in SEAC urged the Dutch to treat with their nationalist opponents. But this view was shared quite widely, by among others Major General H.E. Pyman, Slim's Chief of Staff.[22] The power vacuum surrounding the Japanese collapse enabled the Indonesian nationalists Sukarno and Hatta, to proclaim the Republic of Indonesia on 17 August 1945. British troops, ostensibly tasked only to disarm and evacuate the Japanese and repatriate prisoners, were again drawn into conflict as the Dutch sought to re-establish control. Clashes at Surabaya in eastern Java in late October between nationalists and the two Indian battalions of the 49th Brigade resulted in the death of its commanding officer Brigadier A.W.S. Mallaby. While the violence was condemned in London, there was no coherent policy for dealing with the situation. Mountbatten continued to press the Dutch Lieutenant-Governor General, Dr Van Mook to open talks with the nationalists. In The Hague there was no enthusiasm for this course of action. Sukarno was regarded as a Japanese collaborator and the retention of Empire was believed crucial for the restoration of Dutch power. The British forces in central Java faced attacks from much larger nationalist forces. The British commander Lt General Christison ordered the first air strike on 1 November to relieve beleaguered Gurkha forces at Magalang.[23]

The emergence of the moderate leader Dr Soetan Sjahrir as prime minister of the Indonesian nationalist government improved the prospects for negotiations. Nevertheless, hard-line attitudes continued to be held by some Dutch officials. Admiral Helfrich, who commanded the Dutch Forces, informed Mountbatten in December 1945 that he did 'not see any difference between moderates and

extremists. The moderates were talking with two faces . . . when dealing with native rabbles the most profitable way was to hit immediately and to hit hard.'[24] Mountbatten, on the contrary, wanted to divide the Sjahrir government from the more extremist supporters of Sukarno. He opposed Helfrich's suggestion to bomb Indonesian supply dumps, for, 'nothing could have a worse effect on world opinion than extensive bombing.'[25] After a false start in November, negotiations got under way between the Dutch and the Indonesian nationalists in the spring of 1946. The talks held at the Hoge Veluwe, a holiday resort east of Amsterdam, failed in April 1946 because of Dutch intransigence. Although the task of evacuating the Japanese remained uncompleted, Mountbatten now pressed for a date to be set for the British withdrawal. This was to avoid the possibility of British forces becoming involved in an all out Dutch-Indonesian military conflict. Mountbatten, at the risk of being rebuffed by Van Mook, had to persuade the Dutch that the curtailment of British military activity was acceptable. His forcing the issue of an early date for transferring responsibility was to have a later Indian parallel. As Peter Dennis has appositely remarked, Mountbatten's acceleration of the British withdrawal from the subcontinent, 'could hardly have been unaffected' by his experience in Southeast Asia and especially in the Dutch East Indies.[26]

A number of explanations can be given for Mountbatten's more accommodating attitude to Asian nationalists while at SEAC than other British officials and military commanders, let alone their Dutch and French counterparts. Unlike the older generation of officials, his experience was of coping with the reality of British decline, rather than taking imperial greatness for granted. The SEAC command was taken up in the context of humiliating British military defeats at the hands of the Japanese. The fight back in Burma depended on US air assistance, while the SEAC forces were equipped through the lend-lease programme. Mountbatten was all too aware of the ambivalent American attitude to European Empire. This was summed up in their nickname for SEAC which was (Save England's Asian Colonies). Aside from any personal liberal leanings, the SEAC exposure made him aware of the need to adjust policy to the limitations of power. The logic of the situation was to seek accommodation with the forces of

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Asian nationalism, rather than to fight. He maintained to the chiefs of staff with respect to Burma that the 'more respectable elements' championed by Dorman-Smith had 'been inactive' while the BNA comprised, 'the active, politically conscious and organized elements in the country—those who are in fact in a position to give trouble or not to give it depending on our present decision.'[27] Mountbatten pursued a similar line in the Netherlands East Indies. 'I was strongly of the view that the Dutch had to make a peaceful settlement with the Indonesian leaders', he wrote later, 'and that unless they could find a new basis of friendship to work on there could be no possible future of the Dutch in Indonesia.'[28]

The need to align British and Indian nationalist interests as far as possible was a dominant feature of Mountbatten's viceroyalty. The goal was to preserve economic and strategic ties after independence and especially to secure Indian membership of the Commonwealth. It has led to cries of foul and a lack of even-handedness by Pakistani writers and has in turn been picked up by such Western critics as Stanley Wolpert and Andrew Roberts.[29] As in his earlier SEAC command, this course of action was based both on a realistic awareness of the limits of British power and the belief that it would best serve longer term interests. Mountbatten was temperamentally ideally suited to carry out this task. Moreover, he had already, during his time at SEAC, forged a friendship with Jawaharlal Nehru whose cooperation was essential to a peaceful British withdrawal from India.

Mountbatten and the Visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to Singapore March 1946

Mountbatten's ability to successfully carry out the Attlee government's wishes to transfer power on good terms with India's politicians did not depend only on the flexibility towards Asian nationalism that he displayed at SEAC. His relationship with India's incoming ruler Jawaharlal Nehru was of pivotal importance. It has been the subject of much criticism and even innuendo.[30] Relatively little has been written about their meeting in Singapore in March 1946. Wolpert, indeed, passes over it in a single sentence.[31] Did it in any way set the tone for their future dealings?

Mountbatten had moved SEAC headquarters to Singapore from Kandy the previous autumn, in order to have a closer oversight of his post-surrender tasks. Nehru's visit as an official representative of Congress was sponsored by the Viceroy Lord Wavell. It was intended to investigate and help ameliorate the conditions of Indians in post-war Malaya. There were a number of visits by Indian lawyers, at this time, to defend Indians charged with wartime collaboration. Mountbatten personally involved himself in the preparations for Nehru's visit which is hardly surprising given his earlier attitude to Aung San. The prospect of Nehru's arrival did not meet with universal approval in the British Military Administration in Malaya and amongst die-hard officials elsewhere in South East Asia. Dorman-Smith, reinstated as Burma's governor, refused to receive him. The cordial relations Mountbatten established with Nehru were to have immense future consequences, although neither man at the time could anticipate the circumstances of Mountbatten's final viceroyalty.

Although Wavell had agreed to Nehru's visit, the Director of Intelligence in Malaya was concerned that it would adversely impact on the relations with ex-INA personnel who were being held and interrogated in a number of camps in the military administered territory.[32] His judgement, that Nehru's visit would be 'better avoided', was ignored, but the concerns formed the backdrop to a telegram sent by the British Military Administration on 22 January 1946 to the External Affairs Department of the Government of India. It said that Nehru would be 'expected to coordinate his efforts with the BMA' and that it would not be possible for the BMA to provide him with a car.[33] Nehru angrily replied, 'The conditions under which the British Military Administration have permitted my visit to Malaya are not clear to me. They may be interpreted so as to make my visit lose its utility and value. Normally I do not take orders or directions from British authorities civil or military, in India or elsewhere, nor am I going to Malaya in order to function as a cog in an administrative machinery, as appears to be indicated in your letter . . . My visit', he continued, 'would not be political in the sense of being agitational. But inevitably I shall have to discuss with Indians their political conditions, their disabilities and their present difficulties and how to surmount them. I shall have to help them in organizing the defence

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of such persons as are being proceeded against in courts of law our courts martial, as well as those who have been arrested, detained or are in prison.'

This correspondence arrived while Mountbatten was on tour. He noted that he could 'not quite follow' how the External Affairs Department had handled the telegram from the BMA to make Nehru feel that he was 'going to be seriously restricted.'[34] He reported to Wavell that the restriction about the car was the sort of 'pin-prick' which was likely to get Nehru's back up.[35] Mountbatten accordingly wrote to S.K. Chettur the Representative of the Government of India in Malaya. 'I wish to make my position quite plain', he declared, 'I very naturally agreed immediately to grant (Pandit Nehru) the necessary facilities. I then gave instructions that the BMA were to be informed that I approved of the Pandit's visiting Singapore so long as he would arrange to arrive here during the period I was in residence so that I could talk to him before he started his tour. I am not so foolish as to imagine that there will be no political significance attached to his visit but I know that he is a man of honour and that he will not place me in an embarrassing position by carrying out any agitational activities during the period I am responsible for the administration of this country. It is true that there is a serious shortage of motor transport in Singapore but I will make myself responsible for seeing that a motor car is provided for his tour, if necessary one of my own. You may therefore inform him that any restrictions that have been placed upon his visit by the BMA are hereby removed.'[36]

This private correspondence reveals that Mountbatten had already identified Nehru as a man who could be trusted rather than as a nationalist 'troublemaker'. He was to be accorded respect and to be worked alongside with rather than to be humiliated or kept at arms length. This was in complete contrast to the hostile reaction of Dorman-Smith who had refused to receive Nehru in Burma. Mountbatten ensured that General Messervy's Chief of Staff, Brigadier Chaudhuri should oversee the arrangements for Nehru's brief visit of 18–20 March to Singapore.[37] A couple of days earlier, Mountbatten had received a 'personal off the record' assessment of Nehru provided by Alan Campbell-Johnson, his Recorder at SEAC and later press

attaché when he was Viceroy.[38] Johnson had met Nehru at a private luncheon hosted by the Liberal Party at the House of Commons in the summer of 1939. He assessed that Nehru was in some respects the 'Indian Cripps' although more the artist and aesthete and less the statesman and puritan than Sir Stafford.[39]

Nehru was whisked immediately from the aerodrome to Government House for a meeting with the Supreme Allied Commander. He then drove in Mountbatten's car to visit the Indian Welfare Centre at the Singapore YMCA. 'This item was impromptu and not known to the police', Mountbatten later recorded in a letter to Lord Wavell, 'with the result that a very large crowd assembled and forced its way to the Welfare Building. . . . Though we all got jostled and in fact Edwina was knocked down and Nehru and I had to go to her assistance, all concerned were in excellent temper and I myself was garlanded. Our only difficulty was forcing our way through the crowd who gave a very friendly reception when we parted from Nehru.'[40] Here indeed can be seen a pre-history of the tumultuous scenes in Delhi which accompanied the transfer of power.

Nehru made his way to the Adelphi Hotel where he was staying during the visit. At a reception he addressed a gathering estimated at around 4,000. Later that evening, he dined with the Mountbattens and their daughter Patricia at Government House. After the meal Lord Louis took the opportunity to have 'a heart to heart talk' with him. 'This talk' he reported to Wavell 'was most cordial.'[41] While at dinner, Nehru acceded to Mountbatten's request to cancel a ceremonial wreath laying at the INA memorial which had been arranged by the Indian Reception Committee.[42] Instead, he drove to the memorial early the following morning where he privately laid a wreath.[43] Nehru raised a number of issues surrounding the Indian community in Malaya. These were carefully recorded by Alan Campbell-Johnson so that they could be investigated and Nehru 'provided with a suitable reply.' On his return to the Adelphi, Nehru remarked to Brigadier Chaudhuri that he had not enjoyed an evening with English people so much since his university days thirty years before.[44] The charm offensive had already began to work its magic.

Mountbatten's management of Nehru's visit was well received by the usually hostile Indian press in Singapore. 'They had been

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especially pleased with the gesture that the Supreme Allied Commander had made in accompanying Nehru in a procession through part of Singapore.'[45] Indeed, the *Tamil Nesan* termed it a diplomatic stroke of real genius.[46] Nehru, in a press conference, had paid particular tribute to Mountbatten.[47] When he met with Aung San in Burma on his return journey, Nehru referred to Mountbatten as 'A very noble specimen of British imperialism.'[48] The cordiality did not wear off as a few weeks after his return to Delhi he sent Mountbatten a signed copy of his new book, *The Discovery of India*. Mountbatten replied warmly ending his letter by saying, 'I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your cooperation in making your visit to Malaya run so smoothly.'[49] In this as in other aspects of his public life, he was keenly attuned to the need for good public relations.

Mountbatten and News Management

Stanley Wolpert attributes the publicity and news management surrounding the Mountbatten viceroyalty both to Lord Louis's love of 'regal spectacles' and to his need for 'constant reassurance about his every official act and speech.'[50] His focus on personality obscures the broader policy perspective. It was the British government as well as Mountbatten that was aware the eyes of the world were fixed on events in New Delhi. How these were represented could sway political fortunes both at home and abroad. This is not to deny that the showman in Mountbatten fitted him ideally for the role to display that Britain's departure from India was a dignified exit rather than a 'shameful flight'.

It is possible to again discern continuities between the SEAC and the viceroyalty periods. Mountbatten was as ideally suited to add glamour to a defeated and 'forgotten' 14th Army in Burma, as he was to later add a gloss to the British transfer of power in India. At SEAC, it was retired Chief Air Marshal, Philip Joubert who was in charge of public relations, rather than Alan Campbell-Johnson. There was nevertheless the same mix of Mountbatten's charisma neatly dovetailing with national needs. Mountbatten succeeded in getting the journalist Frank Owen onto his staff. Owen edited the successful

daily newspaper *SEAC*. This both popularized the Supremo's doings and raised morale amongst the British troops with its pithy editorials and cartoon strips. Mountbatten, with Churchill's support, also overcame the chiefs of staff's resistance to his using Forces Radio to broadcast directly to the troops. The response of critics to these activities was to be repeated later. While the Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham admired the film shot about the re-conquest of Burma, he declared that, 'The Supreme Commander and His Staff and Slim and his Staff, doing film-star work made (me) physically sick.'[51] Critics, in fact, maintained that there was too much of Mountbatten and too little of Slim on camera in the 1945 documentary *Burma Victory*. Mountbatten was as careful to stage manage the Japanese surrender in Singapore, as he was the later 'regal' occasions in New Delhi. John Turner,[52] a SEAC cameraman who shot the film footage in Singapore, was later to film the newsreels of the independence day celebrations for the six major companies which had a worldwide audience capacity of around 100 million.[53] When it appeared early in July 1947 that this type of coverage was endangered because of the resistance of Paramount to a rota agreement, Alan Campbell-Johnson had brokered an agreement.[54]

The film star role came naturally to Mountbatten. Indeed, he had performed as an amateur actor in the home movie *Nice and Easy* shot with Charlie Chaplin during his honeymoon visit to Hollywood in October 1922. Throughout his life he was fascinated by all the facets of film making, from its technical aspects, to its educational and informative possibilities. Perhaps most of all he was enthralled by the glamour as well as the mystique attached to the most modern form of entertainment.[55] Mountbatten's career in command of *HMS Kelly* had of course been fictionalized in Noel Coward's wartime propaganda film *In Which We Serve*. This was not only immensely popular in Britain, but won an Academy Award for best foreign film and received a mention in the *New York Times*' list of best ten films in 1942.[56] Mountbatten had played a considerable role in encouraging and promoting *In Which We Serve*, which extolled the contribution of the Royal Navy to the war effort. This was one of a number of British directed feature films made during the war years along with

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the newsreels and the documentaries put out by the Ministry of Information.[57] Most of these productions were designed to keep up morale on the home front. The coverage of SEAC must be understood in this context and not be reduced to an opportunity to snipe at Mountbatten as a 'glamour boy', as indeed his acerbic American Second in Command Joe Stilwell did at the time.

The need for publicity of the Burma theatre at a time of increasing British casualties 'in a very tough battle against a savage enemy, sickness and climate' was raised by Major General Stopford in a letter of 10 May 1944 to General Slim.[58] This arrived shortly after the Ministry of Information had produced its first quarterly report surveying the work on publicizing the Far Eastern theatre. The *Picture Post* and *The Illustrated London News* were provided photographic material with which to inform the British public about developments in this front. Alan Campbell-Johnson was detailed to write a well illustrated pamphlet on the Burma Campaign with an initial print run of 750,000 copies. The US and British photograph and film units attached to SEAC also went up a gear and ensured coverage of Mountbatten's frequent visits to frontline areas.[59] Like other war time commanders, he was filmed giving pep talks to troops, visiting forward positions and poring over maps. This was all in the course of duty for the increasing publicity conscious war machines of the allied powers. Major Irving Asher attached to the US Photo unit argued persuasively in July 1944 that the Burma Campaign should have its own film akin to those which had been produced for the 'Battle for Britain' and the 'Battle for Russia.' He argued for a production under the supervision of Frank Capra, rather than the First Motion Picture Unit which because it was an Air Force Unit might 'tilt the balance to the Air Force activities.'[60] Asher's correspondence with Mountbatten reveals the sophisticated nature of the war time publicity machine with its competing service elements. It also reveals how important the cinema had become in the total war effort. The newsreels had first been sources of entertainment. They took on a more informative and propaganda character as war loomed. Indeed, Mountbatten was approached in March 1939 to provide a script for British newsreels' coverage of the Royal Navy.[61] The

newsreels reached the apogee of their influence during the war years.[62]

While Mountbatten was anything but camera shy, it would be ill-conceived to regard film coverage of the Indian viceroyalty anymore than that of SEAC as merely his personal ego trip. He made it clear to the secretary of state in July 1947 that John Turner 'will be out here to publicize India and not the Viceroy.'[63] When the Managing Director of Gaumont British, Castleton Night, suggested that Turner could be used 'for purely private pictures, Mountbatten informed Sir Arthur Jarrett that, 'we have no intention of doing this since I regard him out here as purely doing a job for the public.'[64] Before Alan Campbell-Johnson had secured Turner's despatch, there were just three newsreel cameramen covering the whole of India. Moreover, P. Mohan of Movietone News was regarded as a 'novice' who had only been brought into the business by his brother Ved Parkash who worked for Paramount News.[65] As a result of Turner's coverage, Gaumont British was to release 700 feet of film shot for the independence day celebrations. Paramount and Universal showed half this amount drawn not only from Turner's film, but that of Ved Parkash and P. Mohan.[66] Such coverage of cheering and joyful crowds in New Delhi reinforced the official British view of the end of the Indian Empire. It was not a defeat, but a fulfilment of a long held promise of responsible government to a grateful Indian population.

Conclusion

There are important continuities between Mountbatten's SEAC experience and his service as the last viceroy of British India. Both situations were marked by his possession of a role of immense responsibility in circumstances of profound shifts of power. At SEAC, Mountbatten displayed considerable adaptability in responding to the historical imperatives of depleted European administrative and military resources in the face of resurgent Asian nationalism. Pragmatic and liberal responses to nationalists, whether in Burma, Singapore, Malaya, or the Netherlands East Indies did not find favour with representatives of a European imperial *ancient regime* many of whom were out of touch with the new post-war world. Mountbatten's

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leadership was thus criticized and contested. Nevertheless, as a result of his SEAC experience he was well suited to respond to the circumstances in India.

These were dissimilar from SEAC in that by the time he arrived in New Delhi, the issue was not whether Britain would transfer power, but the terms on which this would occur. The pragmatism he had displayed at SEAC was more useful than any 'liberal' tendencies. In particular, SEAC had attuned him to the need to avoid rebellion because of the limits of post-war European military power. His ability to oversee a 'triumphant' transfer of power was further enhanced by the cordial personal relations he had established with Nehru at Singapore and the ease with which he managed the news media. The Attlee administration did not want to appear defeated in India, not only because of its impact on British voters, but on opinion throughout the Empire. The key to avoiding this fate lay in ensuring the Congress's cooperation in the demission of power. Mountbatten was supremely well placed to deliver on this front.

His actions in India were invariably controversial because the warmth of his friendship with Nehru highlighted the British policy driven imperative for good ties with Congress. The Muslim League appeared even more marginalized in the process than it would have been in any case. This led not only to claims of favouritism which were taken up by non-Pakistani critics, but was a factor in Mountbatten being blamed for the human costs of partition. This centred around the acceleration of the British withdrawal. Mountbatten's egotism displayed in accounts of the transfer of power he gave later in his life, obscured the limited room for manoeuvre in which he had to operate in 1947. He was no more able to dictate events in India, than at SEAC. His strength lay rather in the nimble footed manner in which he kept ahead of the game. It was not personal impetuosity or ignorance, as Wolpert would have us believe, that accelerated the transfer of power. But rather the realization, Mountbatten had gained at SEAC of the futility of resisting the tide of Asian nationalism with depleted administrative and military resources. To this situation he brought a 'can do' approach, panache and supreme self-assurance. This ensured that the Transfer of Power seemed to contemporaries as anything but a 'shameful flight.'

NOTES

1. See I. Talbot, 'The Mountbatten Viceroyalty Revisited: Themes and Controversies', in C.M. Woolgar (ed.), *Mountbatten on the Record* (Southampton, 1996) pp. 53–74.
2. S. Wolpert, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
3. The exceptions are Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* (London, 2001), p. 371; Alan Campbell-Johnson, 'Mountbatten: The Triple Assignment, 1942–1948. A Recorder's Recollections', in C.M. Woolgar (ed.), *Mountbatten on the Record* (Southampton, 1996), pp. 1–21.
4. Mountbatten to Admiral Sir Arthur Power ADM1/22900 National Archives Kew.
5. See B. Fergusson, *The Watery Maze* (London: Collins, 1961).
6. Mountbatten was criticized by Stilwell among others because of his 'extravagance' and the 'enormity' of his staff.
7. The malaria rate which was 84 per cent of the army strength in 1943 fell to 13 per cent by 1945. Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* (London, 2001), p. 251.
8. P. Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace: Mountbatten and South East Asia Command, 1945–46* (Manchester, 1987).
9. Review of Political Events in South East Asia 1945–March 1946, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 4/1.10, Folder 2.
10. See John Springhall, 'Mountbatten versus the Generals: British Military Rule of Singapore, 1945–46', *Journal of Contemporary History* 36/4 (2001), pp. 635–52. Hone was not alone in opposing Mountbatten's 'liberal' policy; similar reservations were shared by Brigadier Patrick McKerron, deputy CCAO Singapore and Lieutenant-General Sir Miles Dempsey, Commander Allied Land Forces South-East Asia.
11. Ibid., p. 641.
12. Ibid., pp. 649–50. Mountbatten's military advisors were to eventually win the day as immediately after BMA rule ceased at the end of March 1946, the acting Governor Brigadier McKerron deported the ten Chinese Communist leaders who had been held without trial. They faced summary justice in Kuomintang controlled South China.
13. For details, see A.J. Stockwell, 'Southeast Asia in War and Peace: The End of European Colonial Empires', in Nicholas Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge History of South East Asia*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 329–85; Nicholas Tarling, 'Lord Mountbatten and the Return of Civil Government to Burma', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 9/2, (Jan. 1983), pp. 197–226.
14. Tarling, 'Lord Mountbatten and the Return of Civil Government to Burma', p. 220.
15. Appreciation of Mountbatten's Relations with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, Governor of Burma, undated. Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 4/1.10, Folder 1 of 2.
16. See Nicholas Owen, 'Mountbatten at South-East Asia Command', in C.M. Woolgar (ed.), *Mountbatten On the Record* (Southampton, 1997), p. 25.

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17. Ibid., p. 26.
18. Appreciation of Mountbatten's Relations with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith.
19. Tarling, 'Lord Mountbatten and the Return of Civil Government to Burma', see page 222 &ff.
20. Minutes of 301st Meeting of Supreme Allied Commander, 6 Dec. 1945. Policy in Netherlands East Indies, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 4/1.10, Folder 1.
21. Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace*, p. 65.
22. Ibid., p. 106.
23. Ibid., p. 24.
24. Minutes of 301st Meeting of Supreme Allied Commander, 6 Dec. 1945, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 4/1.10, Folder 1.
25. Ibid.
26. Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace*, p. 230.
27. Owen, 'Mountbatten at South East Asia Command', p. 27.
28. Mountbatten to Yong Mun Cheong, 10 May 1976, Mountbatten Papers South East Asia Command K246C (Dutch East Indies Dutch-British Indonesia Relations 1973–8), University of Southampton.
29. Notably in his chapter on Mountbatten in *Eminent Churchillians* (London, 1994)
30. See Akbar. S. Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (London, 1997).
31. Wolpert, *Shameful Flight* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 129.
32. Director of Intelligence Memo 24 Jan. 1946, WO 203/6259 National Archives Kew.
33. BMA (M) KL to Foreign New Delhi 22 Jan. 1946. WO 203/6191 Visit of Pandit Nehru, Jan.–Mar. 1946, National Archives Kew.
34. Note by Mountbatten 27 Feb. 1946. WO 203/6192 Visit of Pandit Nehru, Jan.–Mar. 1946, National Archives Kew.
35. Mountbatten to Wavell, 31 Jan. 1946. WO 203/6192 Visit of Pandit Nehru, Jan.–Mar. 1946, National Archives Kew.
36. Mountbatten to Chettur, 21 Feb. 1946. WO 203/6192 Visit of Pandit Nehru, Jan.–Mar. 1946, National Archives Kew.
37. SACSEA to HQ Malaya Command, 9 Mar. 1946, WO 203/6192 National Archives Kew.
38. A.C.J. Recorder 16 Mar. 1946 to Supreme Allied Commander WO 203/6259 National Archives Kew.
39. Ibid.
40. Mountbatten to Wavell, 22 Mar. 1946, WO 203/6259 National Archives Kew.
41. Ibid.
42. SACSEA to Malaya Command 19 Mar. 1946 WO 203/6192 National Archives Kew.
43. L.F. Pendred Air Vice Marshal, Director of Intelligence, the Visit of Pandit Nehru to Malaya 18–26 Mar. 1946, WO 203/6259 National Archives Kew.
44. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 328.
45. Extract from Minutes of Supreme Allied Commander's 324th Meeting, 19 Mar. 1946, WO 203/6259 National Archives Kew.
46. Press Intelligence 22 Mar. 1946, BMA (M) Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 3/2.5.

47. Extract 25th I & C.A Meeting, 20 Mar. 1946, WO 203/6259 National Archives Kew.
48. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 328.
49. Mountbatten to Nehru 2 May 1946, WO 203/6259 National Archives Kew.
50. Wolpert, *Shameful Flight*, p. 151.
51. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 255.
52. See John Turner, *Filming History: The Memoirs of John Turner Newsreel Cameraman* (London, 2001).
53. The six companies were: Paramount, Pathe, Gaumont British, Movietone, Universal, and Metro, Alan Campbell-Johnson to Menon, 6 May 1948, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 3/2.5.
54. See Alan Campbell-Johnson to Mountbatten, 11 Jul. 1947, MB1/E30. He was assisted by the efforts of Sir Arthur Jarratt of British Lion Film Limited.
55. See Adrian Smith, 'Mountbatten Goes to the Movies: promoting the Heroic Myth Through Cinema', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 26/3 (Aug. 2006) pp. 395–416.
56. Nigel Mace, 'British Historical Epics in the Second World War', in Philip M. Taylor (ed.), *Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988) p. 124.
57. Ibid., p. 7.
58. Stopford to Slim, 10 May 1944, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 4/1.10, Folder 2.
59. For details of these, see Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 253.
60. Major Irving Asher to Mountbatten, 7 Jul. 1944, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 3/1.14, Folder 1.
61. Smith, 'Mountbatten Goes to the Movies', p. 401.
62. By 1945, 30 million people were attending the cinema in Britain every week. The figure had stood at 19 million in 1939. Taylor, *Britain and the Cinema*, p. 6.
63. Viceroy to Secretary of State Telegram, 17 Jul. 1947, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 3/2.5.
64. Mountbatten to Sir Arthur Jarratt, 26 Aug. 1947, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 3/2.5.
65. Alan Campbell-Johnson to Castleton Knight, 30 Apr. 1947, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers MSS 350.A.3002, 3/2.5.
66. Castleton Knight to Alan Campbell-Johnson, 22 Aug. 1947, Alan Campbell-Johnson Papers. MSS 350.A.3002, 3/2.5.

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8

The Kashmir Conflict and Nationalism in India and Pakistan

Sten Widmalm

Introduction

The Kashmir conflicts have undoubtedly been one of the main obstacles to development in India and Pakistan. They have brought indescribable suffering to the Kashmiri population, with death to civilians, military personnel, and separatists. They have also drained the central government of resources that could have been used for much more productive purposes. However, while it has often been said that these conflicts have been one of the most serious threats to the nation-building processes in the region, it has also been argued that the memory of suffering in these conflicts and the recurrent campaigns aimed at engaging nationalistic sentiments and loyalties in times of tension have become important building blocks in the nationalisms that have emerged in India and Pakistan. The effect has been that the fighting and the nationalist rhetoric built around the Kashmir dispute, and the suffering it has brought, have created bonds that have helped to hold the individual nations together. Nonetheless, this chapter argues that the outcomes from these processes, although similar in nature, have had quite different effects for India and Pakistan respectively. The course of events in more recent times in Kashmir reveals dramatic differences in the political and developmental trajectories of India and Pakistan. India's is one of stability, economic growth, and assertion of its identity in the domestic as well as the global arena. Pakistan's can be described as one plagued by internal

conflicts, ethnic, religious, and elite rivalry. And since the 1980s, Pakistan has become more and more entangled in the disastrous political events in Afghanistan. Nationalism in Pakistan is losing the common denominator it once had for its citizens. There are real fears that the process that split the country in 1971 could be repeated, with Balochistan remaining restive, and rising ethnic tensions and violence once again in Karachi.

In this chapter, I will describe the impact of the Kashmir crisis on both Indo-Pakistan relations and domestic nationalism from independence. The focus will be on the polarization of India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue and how it has forged at least some essential parts of their respective nationalisms, and how the absence of conflict over Kashmir has sometimes revealed internal conflicts instead. Second, I will summarize what happened during the détente which developed between 2002 and 2008, and how a decline of violence in Kashmir can be seen as related to identity issues and nationalism in Pakistan and India. Finally, I will discuss where the more recent events are taking Pakistan and India. Is there any chance for a post-Kashmir-conflict era in South Asia? What would it take to get there?

The Kashmir Conflicts and Links to Nationalism in Pakistan and India from 1947 to 2002

Nationalism and patriotism can connect with and begin to produce sentiments, notions, ideas and values which can lead to war and even genocide—the Second World War is an obvious example. But the sequence may also be reversed. In order for a state to conduct war it needs to invoke feelings of nationalism and patriotism that may make its people willing even to sacrifice their lives. The war in Iraq was a recent example. The US needed to present Al-Qaida and the September 11 attack on the US as linked to Saddam Hussein in order to induce the American public to support it. The existence of nationalistic support and patriotism is what Clausewitz once referred to as a *principal moral element*.[1] Without it, it is argued, you have no prospect of success in war. This discussion is relevant for South Asia as well. The first war between India and Pakistan also forged the

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early ideas of nationhood for people in both Pakistan and India. Feelings of nationalism and patriotism were necessary for the creation of the two independent states. These feelings were naturally also based on the very opposite of aggression. In a chapter on 'Patriotism and Racism' Benedict Anderson says, 'In an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love.'[2] The history of India and Pakistan shows how such feelings, for the country, or the nation and its people, were a source of unity that ended the British presence and created two sovereign states. But it is still also a history where those feelings for one's own country were, nevertheless, entangled and moulded in the first and then the subsequent wars between India and Pakistan. And here Kashmir was in the centre of the process. Nationalism became more or less synonymous with a claim to Kashmir and with the neighbour as the enemy. Other factors naturally played into the nation building process, as will be seen below, but Kashmir has clearly had a central role in nationalism in Pakistan primarily but also in India., especially in its politically powerful Hindi speaking belt. Here we will present some examples of when nationalism has been connected with the conflict, and also what has happened during times when the conflict has been more dormant.

The Birth of the Nations in 1947 and the First Kashmir War

The birth of Pakistan and India and the pains that accompanied it were of course not only related to the Kashmir conflict. The tragedies at partition created the worst possible starting point. As many scholars have pointed out, the terrible communal clashes gave rise to aggressive nationalist sentiments in both India and in Pakistan. There was also mistrust arising from differences over the division of assets and legacies arising from the bitter political struggle between Congress and the Muslim League from 1940 onwards.[3] With respect to the division of assets, Ayesha Jalal has remarked: 'Both sides fought

tooth and nail for every rupee of assets, the one anxious to deny, the other determined to secure.'[4]

It is easy to see parallels with other conflicts in the world where atrocities and crimes left people with open wounds, which then gave birth to intolerant ideologies. So the mass migration of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in North India and their confrontations shaped ideas of nationalism on both sides. It was however the dispute over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir which provided the catalyst for the emergence of an 'enduring rivalry' between the newly independent Indian and Pakistan states.[5] Within weeks of their freedom from the Raj, the two countries were at war, the first of a series of military engagements which have profoundly affected South Asia's development. Conflict over Kashmir has framed nation building in Pakistan, and to a lesser extent in India, and it has also been made more irresolvable because of the region's symbolic role in national identity. It is often stated that Kashmir was symbolically of central importance to India because of the 'guarantee' of secularism provided by the inclusion of a Muslim majority state. Pakistani nationalism had a strong irredentist element because the state forged on the basis of the Two Nation Theory was 'incomplete' without Kashmir which of course provided the 'K' in the acronym of Pakistan. In recent times the rise of religious nationalisms in both states has added a new dimension to the symbolic value of Kashmir. Freedom for Kashmiri Muslims is part of a greater jihad for Pakistani Islamists, while Hindu nationalists see Kashmir as a 'holy land' which should be included in a unified Indian state.

The roots of the conflict are well known, although highly contested. The indecisive Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, the Hindu ruler of a Muslim majority state which Pakistan claimed under the concept of the Two Nation Theory, had come under strong pressure as armed groups from Pakistan moved towards Srinagar. In return for Indian military support, he acceded to India. The timing and background to the signing of the Instrument of Accession itself remains highly controversial and has in itself become a dispute between the two countries. Military conflict over Kashmir was itself far from uncomplicated because of the recent division of the Indian army and the large number of British officers who served in its two

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successor forces with General Claude Auchinleck as the Supreme Commander.[6] Although independence had been celebrated in both Pakistan and India, the war was fought by soldiers with very fresh and more peaceful memories of those who were now their new enemy. Birdwood describes this as:

> [T]his most ambiguous of war, novel in that never before can two armies in opposition have known quite so much about each other, nor really have been more surprised at finding they were expected to put into practice against former colleagues the lessons they had learnt together in the same schools. [7]

Despite this background, the war forged cohesion in the respective states. It is difficult to make certain assessments from this distance in time, but others closer to the scene when it happened have evaluated the effect of the war on the military at least. In *India from Curzon to Nehru*, Durga Das describes how the war forged unity.[8]

> The warfare in Kashmir proved a blessing in disguise from the national point of view. It not only trained our officers and *jawans* to plan operations and work in cohesion but also threw up men like Shrinagesh, Thimayya and Kalwant Singh whose daring exploits marked them for future leadership. The blood shed by officers and men in the state did not go in vain. If the Army gave India Kashmir, Kashmir gave India its Army.[9]

And to paraphrase Das, Kashmir, at this point in time gave India and Pakistan pillars for their nationalisms. With respect to Pakistan, the war not only served as a rallying point, but encouraged its development into what some scholars have termed as an 'insecurity state' that 'perceived itself not only small and disadvantaged but on the defensive against real and present threat, with its survival at stake.'[10] Just as the Indian Muslim political identity in the latter years of colonial rule had been forged by the Muslim League around opposition to a Hindu 'other', so post-independence Pakistani nationalism came to be defined in resistance to a hostile Hindu India. This was to have repercussions for Pakistan's nation building in that it encouraged centralization, and marginalization of the large Hindu population in East Bengal who became regarded as a potential 'fifth

column'. Simultaneously, resources were diverted from what might be termed human development projects, to fund military expenditure. The 1947–8 Kashmir War led Pakistan down the path of a 'political economy of defence', rather than one of development.[11]

The War in 1965 and Regional Challenges

Between 1963 and 1965 the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir became more closely integrated with that of the Indian Union. In Pakistan this was seen as an attempt at integration on the ground as well. Tension rose along the border again and war, or more correctly two large but separate confrontations, followed in 1965. The Hazratbal crisis (triggered by an alleged theft of the Prophet's hair) more than a year earlier had to some extent caused dissent in Indian controlled Kashmir, but Pakistan seems to have overestimated the local support for a revolt, when it launched a military advance in the Vale of Kashmir known as 'Operation Gibraltar'.[12] Be that as it may, feelings of nationalism were promoted by governments of both sides in the name of Kashmir and national security. How this created cohesion in Pakistan can be illustrated by the way in which domestic conflicts were laid aside. In Pakistan, the area which now constitutes Balochistan was plagued by tension. In particular, as Paul Titus and Nina Swindler explain, the central government was worried about the activities of the 'ethno-nationalist *sardars* Khair Bakhsh Marri, Ataullah Mengal, and Ahmad Nawaz Bugti' since they 'performed dual roles as tribal heads and as nationalist leaders.'[13] However, when war with India became imminent and then broke out in 1965, '[t]he Marris suspended their agitation'. Whether or not this was intended, the conflict with India significantly defused internal tensions, although it should also be pointed out that the effect was not long-lasting.[14] The underlying causes of tension with several tribal groups were not resolved and soon climbed back on the stage again. After the war, other actors in the region picked up on the strong sentiments of dissent and opposition to Ayub Khan's government. The Baloch Students Organization gained strong support after it was founded in 1967 and '[s]everal student leaders went on to become guerrilla leaders in the 1970s.' But the strongest challenge to the still little

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more than twenty-year-old nation was the chasm between West and East Pakistan—with India in between. The Awami League in East Pakistan was at this time, one could argue, the functional equivalent of political actors like the Muslim United Front in Jammu and Kashmir in relation to the Indian central government in the late 1980s—but on a much greater scale.

The War of 1971 and the Following, Brief, Democracy in Jammu and Kashmir

The next major conflict between India and Pakistan occurred in the struggle for Bangladesh's independence in December 1971. This was one of the most complex episodes in the Cold War involving the US, the USSR, and China.[15] The war also affected Kashmir, since some of the fighting spread to the Punjab border and the ceasefire line in Kashmir as well. In an important way the outcome of the war de-radicalized politics in Jammu and Kashmir. In India strong sentiments of nationalism were manifested in connection with this war; the Union was seen as strong and there was little space left for tolerance towards Pakistan. In Jammu and Kashmir this was realized by local leaders. Consequently, Mirza Afzal Beg dropped the demand for a plebiscite and Sheikh Abdullah no longer saw it as feasible to aim for an independent Kashmir state.[16] This trend was manifested in the Delhi Accord signed by Sheikh Abdullah and Indira Gandhi and it was agreed that Jammu and Kashmir was to be seen as an integral part of India, although Article 370 was to remain, thereby giving a higher degree of autonomy in the Union in comparison to other states.[17] The Plebiscite Front changed its name (back) to the National Conference, and managed to move forward while still keeping a stance in politics that was independent from the Centre. It was possible to do this as democracy was allowed to begin to breathe after the Emergency. And during the time that this was the case, in the late seventies and early eighties, there was negligible support for separatism, in particular in violent forms, in Jammu and Kashmir.[18]

The loss of East Pakistan not only drastically reduced the power of the rump state of Pakistan vis-a-vis India, but imperilled the Two Nation Theory cornerstone of its ideology. Henceforth, Islam was to

form a central pillar of state construction, although its role had been accorded significance as early as the passing of the Objectives Resolution. An Islamic vision of Pakistan however still harked back to resistance to India, either the 'secular' 'other' variant of the state or a growing 'Hindu' nationalist version following the rise of the Hindu Right in the 1980s. The dispute over Kashmir still formed the focal point of this resistance.

Although it is common to ascribe to Ziaul Haq the key role of making Islam such an important political factor in Pakistan, it should be remembered that the process by which politics and nationalism were increasingly often shrouded in religious attributes began during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's term in office. This was symbolized by hosting the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Lahore in 1974. Zia's personality and the circumstances of his rule hastened the Islamization process but as Nasr wrote '[i]n the end, the separation of Bangladesh acted to Islamize Pakistan's politics. Islamic identity, promoted by the state to contain separatist tendencies, now drew on the more strident ideology of Islamism to define Pakistani identity.'[19]

Bhutto committed Pakistan to the construction of a nuclear device as a means to 'equalize' Pakistan's conventional weapons inferiority with India. He also sought to carry out a domestic reform programme including nationalization of basic industries and land reform under the heading of a populist 'Islamic socialism.' Nonetheless, his endeavours were increasingly marked by authoritarian tendencies. This had their most serious consequences in Balochistan. His calling of troops into the region to oppose a 'tribal/nationalist' uprising, gave an opening for the Pakistan army to re-establish its influence following the debacle in Bangladesh. The legacies of the conflict were fatal for the Bhutto regime, they also continue to impact on that area today.[20]

Mrs Gandhi, like Bhutto, became a victim of political populism. Her attempts at centralization renewed tensions in Jammu and Kashmir, although it was the crisis in the Punjab which led to her assassination in 1984. The continuing corruption of democratic processes in Jammu and Kashmir were to reap the harvest of the *intifada* uprising.[21] While this was a spontaneous occurrence, it was to provide Pakistan with the opportunity of waging a more successful

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proxy war against its Indian rival, than it had been able to do in the Punjab. In the words of Talbot and Singh:

> Heightened religious mobilization in both countries in the 1980s and 1990s added a new dimension to the India-Pakistan rivalry. It coincided with the rise in militancy in Kashmir from 1987 and almost brought the two countries to the brink of a nuclear exchange in 1990 . . . India regularly accused Pakistan of sponsoring terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and the north-eastern states. Pakistan in turn often pointed an accusing finger at Indian intervention in Karachi and Sindh.[22]

One might also add to this analysis, Pakistan became concerned about Indian involvement in Balochistan. By the end of the 1990s, India and Pakistan were getting ready for war again—and now the nationalist rhetoric was more aggressive than ever.

The War of 1999 and Nuclear Proliferation

After the nuclear tests in 1998, first in India and then in Pakistan, tension between the two countries rose rapidly. The timing of the Indian test was mostly determined by the problems facing Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was attempting to hold together a weak coalition and facing far-reaching demands by the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu. But the BJP had clearly declared its aim to move India forward as a nuclear arms nation long before. The tests provoked outbursts of nationalistic feeling in many of the larger cities in both Pakistan and India, and nationalism and national pride became increasingly synonymous with the bomb. The tension in the summer was, however, relieved by dialogue and increased communication between the two nations early in 1999 when, for example, Vajpayee agreed to open up a bus service to Lahore, and certain agreements were reached which reduced the risk of nuclear war by accident. Later, in May, however, it transpired that troops from Pakistan had taken hold of strategic points in the Kargil area of Kashmir that were on the Indian side of the line of control. Hostilities broke out and initially it proved difficult to remove the intruders. The conflict escalated, but India was successfully able to diplomatically isolate Pakistan, despite attempts by Islamabad to maintain that the

intruders were 'Kashmiri freedom fighters.' After Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to the White House in July, he was forced to make a humiliating withdrawal of forces from Kargil.

What stands out during this period is the level of aggression and the nationalist tone of the leaders of the two countries. Nawaz Sharif described the intrusion in Kargil in common ethnic metaphors. The people were described as lava rising from a volcano—a natural force beyond human control.[23] What happened was a consequence of natural laws, not politics. *India Today*, for example, carried a number of stories which focused strongly on individual soldiers and their efforts in the war and aroused feelings of national pride. The danger of this strong polarization was, as in most wars, that when the media got caught up in creating heroes, it became increasingly difficult to report on the same events with a critical mind. Or as expressed by Talbot:

> Newscasts of martyred Indian *jawans* sustained an intense pro-war feeling. The outpouring of national pride and fervour also included a strong 'Anti-Paki' sentiment. Television even less than the press did not question the costs, human and economic, of the conflict. Nor was there anything in the coverage other than ready acceptance of the army's daily briefing.[24]

Rising tensions between the military and Nawaz Sharif, who claimed that the army had pursued its own agenda, were the legacies for Pakistan of the Kargil episode. In October 1999, General Musharraf seized power in Pakistan's third military coup. The state of which he took the reins was divided in its loyalties. Vali Nasr argues that after the coup in 1999,

> The new regime was based on an untenable relationship between a secular-leaning military elite that promised secular development and Islamist extremist forces. The military sought to manage this situation by encouraging Islamist extremism to spend its energies in Afghanistan and Kashmir.[25]

In short, India and Pakistan were more polarized over the Kashmir issue than ever at this time. The nationalist language became even stronger and it made internal conflicts in both India and Pakistan

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seem relatively minor by comparison. And visibly it continued the process of making the citizens of the two countries see each other as enemies.

On the Brink of Disaster—2001/2002

Although the fighting died down in the late summer of 1999, the biggest crisis was still to face the two nations. The prospects for the future were at their darkest in 2001 and 2002 when the Indian state ordered a full-scale mobilization of its armed forces following the attack on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi by militants trained in Pakistan. This led to a dramatic mobilization of more than a million soldiers along the Line of Control. Tension now increased to such a level that, for example, embassies in India were sending home personnel as they genuinely feared a nuclear war. The connection with a steady decline in Hindu-Muslim relations was palpable. In Gujarat, India, in 2002 at least 1000 Muslims were killed in riots—and the sitting BJP Chief Minister Narendra Modi was re-elected despite being widely seen as carrying a significant responsibility for the massacres. To give an indication of the inflamed context, it may be mentioned that Modi is also known for policies in the state such as the reform of textbooks in schools whereby Gandhi's role in India's history has been downplayed, while fascism in Europe, especially Hitler's role, has been portrayed as very good for development. Furthermore, elections in Jammu and Kashmir in September–October were plagued with high levels of violence and a low voter turnout of around 46 per cent. These were some of the darkest times in the recent history of India and Pakistan. Admittedly Pakistan and India put up a strong facade and displayed great national unity. But the price for this was getting close to something like mutual destruction. Fortunately this was also realized by central political actors on both sides.

After the Kashmir 2001/2002 Crisis

The Détente

In the event US pressure, along with indirect democracy brought the two countries back from the brink.[26] The US was particularly keen to still tensions because of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. One of the first positive signs came on 13 October, when Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishnan Advani announced that some troop withdrawals were to be made. It should be noted that only a few years earlier Advani had spoken openly in the media in favour of so-called 'hot pursuits' into Pakistan. In other words, in situations when suspected terrorists fled over the line of control to Pakistan, the Indian army should be able to follow them into Pakistan-controlled areas. But Advani backed the new policy and soon afterwards the first withdrawals were made by both sides. Both sides had agreed at some point that the current situation was untenable. A process of mutual troop withdrawals commenced.

In any case, six months later India sent unambiguous signals that it wanted to open a dialogue with Pakistan and these were well received. After this, more positive signals from both sides led to continued troop withdrawals, and talks about limitations on nuclear arms etc. Official and direct talks were initiated in February 2003; in May, plans for reopening the Delhi-Lahore bus link were announced; announcements of cricket matches between India and Pakistan were made; the Delhi-Lahore air link was restored; in September, India and Pakistan exchanged prisoners after the Kargil war; and in November 2003, a ceasefire along the Line of Control came into effect. The détente was established, but there were still certainly enough threats to derail the process.

Challenges to the Détente

The dilemma for any government that has aroused the sentiments of its citizens against those of another nation is that when more peaceful times return it has to convince the people that what has been said earlier is to a large extent no longer valid and that the enemy is in fact less of an enemy than before. This process is very sensitive

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and fragile. If violent action is taken by some radical group the opposition can always capitalize on this and make the usual demands for 'stronger measures' by pointing out that the ruling party or coalition is 'soft on terrorism.' So the initial phase of a peace process or even a détente will almost always see attacks by 'spoilers' that will use this opportunity. The détente between India and Pakistan was no exception.

There have been a number of attacks in India which have been most likely designed to break the improvement in relations between the two countries. The attacks have probably been carried out by organizations with an interest in a continuation of the conflict in Kashmir. One of the greatest challenges to the process of normalization came in connection with the earthquake in Kashmir in October 2005. It was a difficult balancing act for Pakistan to decide after the earthquake how much help to accept from India and to what extent to let organizations that were seen as violent Islamists act to relieve those in need. Despite this dilemma, talks with India opened border-crossing points at a relatively rapid pace. This probably precipitated the bomb attacks in New Delhi in October, which occurred just when such talks were being held. And the Mumbai attack in July 2006 could have been designed to break the normalization process (and nearly did) between the two countries.

Within Indian administered Kashmir conflict broke out once again during the summer of 2008. A dispute over a suggestion to let the Hindu religious organization 'The Amarnath Shrine Board' take control of land in Jammu and Kashmir set off riots that killed at least 15 people in two months. This was followed by the Shopian rape case in 2009 and several accusations against the military forces that all together made the situation in Jammu and Kashmir much more volatile again. These have certainly been tragic set backs to the process which had led to a de-escalation of violence in the region and they illustrate how fragile the situation still remains. Nonetheless, the leaders of both India and Pakistan have at least up to this point shown great resolve and determination not to allow events like these stop the normalization process that has occurred since 2002. However, and in spite of this, the paths the two nations have trodden during the last decade are very different.

India's Path Sixty Years after Independence

No doubt India is facing crises and challenges. For example, modernization measures and changes in the agricultural sector in combination with inflation have brought farmers to such a point of despair that they commit suicide in their thousands.[27] Andhra Pradesh has been the worst hit. And India certainly does not lack challenges to the unity of the nation and the idea of India. Since the Kashmir conflict decreased in intensity we can see, more clearly, serious problems in the north-eastern states; these include the activities of the United Liberation Front of Asom, radical and violent political agendas of various groups in Nagaland, and an expansion of the violence of the Naxalites, who are also active in many other parts of the country. Many of these groups profess a Maoist ideology and their recruitment has often been from the most vulnerable tribal and lower caste groups. The central government faces radical challenges here, but in some cases progress has been made towards peaceful solutions—for example, the Bodo Liberation Tigers laid down their weapons in 2005. Afterwards the Bodoland Territorial Council was formed and it aims to compete politically within a democratic framework. But it is important to observe that deaths of farmers, separatism, and conflicts are not the only elements of the general picture of India today. Besides the rather hyped image of India as an IT-economy and the economic growth figures produced by the soaring economy in some sectors, there are other areas where India is making an imprint that will be long-lasting; for example, in the global political arena, with the help of coalitions with other international partners, and in the energy sector.

It is useful to note the cooperation established between India, South Africa, and Brazil expressed in the IBSA forum, which is widely held to be one of the strongest upcoming political coalition forces in the Southern hemisphere today.[28] So far it has shown a strong capacity to move the three democracies forward on issues relating to trade, security, and energy.[29] With regard to energy, India has also stepped into a unique relationship with the US with the 'Indo-US nuclear deal' which gives India access to nuclear fuel and technology from the US—even though India has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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In short, the image of India can be summarized as modern, capitalist, and to use international political jargon, a medium-range power which is steadily marching forward—sometimes a bit out of pace, but forward. These aspirations are focused in achieving permanent membership of the UN Security Council. While the Kashmir issue is linked with ongoing security anxieties and a failure to normalize relations with Pakistan, it has less centrality than it did in the past, especially in the areas of the country which are at the forefront of the rapid economic growth which is pushing India forward to great power status. Pakistan's international image is in many respects becoming the mirror image of India's, with it being seen as a centre of potential instability in the region and beyond. Domestically, the Kashmir cause continues to form a central focus of identity and strategic thinking. Despite the problems on its Afghanistan border, the Pakistan army still regard the main threat as emanating from India and link this inextricably with the Kashmir issue.

Pakistan's Path Sixty Years after Independence

The political events after 9/11 locked Pakistan into a position from which it was almost impossible to challenge India as it had done in previous years. General Musharraf was in no position to defy the US in late 2001, when President Bush asked him simply to pick sides. And at this time, India had already teamed up with the US. It did however mean that Musharraf had to turn his back on some quite radical groups that had previously been active in the Kashmir conflict. Musharraf also made himself the target of forces in the intelligence organizations and the army that had bonded strongly over the years with the Taliban movement and its government in Afghanistan. The events which followed after cooperation with the US began had the effect of leaving Musharraf less and less scope to let political opponents act freely. Since the US saw General Musharraf as the most reliable leader in Pakistan, the emphasis in this relationship revolved mainly around security matters and events in Afghanistan. Concerns for democracy were set aside and this caused a severe crisis with more serious effects that what we may have

originally perceived to be the case. After the election in February 2008 some observers and political actors in the region seemed to think that if only Musharraf would withdraw from power and civilian leaders would gain control of both the office of the prime minister and the president, instability in the country, especially that relating to violence, could be cured. Nevertheless, after Musharraf completely let go of the reins of power when he finally resigned as President of Pakistan in August 2008, violent attacks carried out by extremist Islamist groups, some with their roots in the big cities and some with bases in the border areas next to Afghanistan, continued indiscriminately. To these forces it did not matter if the leaders were civilian or connected to the military. The problems facing Pakistan today have been shaped by processes that have taken long to forge and which will not easily be tackled by directives from Islamabad. The geopolitical setting and deep underlying discontent of some groups in society sets some parameters that are very hard to change. There are two interrelated indicators of how these problems have been growing for almost a decade: attacks on the government and the army on an unprecedented scale long before the fall of 2007, and a rapid growth of regional demands—some in areas where the government of Pakistan has little control.

The number and the scale of attacks on the state, including the army and its leaders, are, higher than ever in Pakistan's history. The post 9/11 strategic realignment pitted the Pakistan state against some of its erstwhile militant Islamic proxies. In Rawalpindi on 11 December 2003, a bomb went off, detonated from a bridge, seconds after a motor caravan with Musharraf had passed by. Two weeks later, also in Rawalpindi, there was a new attempt on Musharraf's life by two suicide bombers. Seventeen people died. Half a year later in Attock, Northern Punjab, a suicide bomber attacked Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. The attacker came up alongside the car in which Aziz was travelling. Eight or nine people died. Also, in the Dir area, NWFP, a roadside bomb killed six soldiers. In November 2006, in Dargai, NWFP, a suicide bomber killed 42 soldiers. And in April, 2007, Charsadda, NWFP, there was a suicide bomb attack against the Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao, who narrowly escaped being killed after holding a meeting. Twenty people lost their lives. These

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are just some important attacks that can be seen as the prelude to the sharp rise in violence that followed in Pakistan after the Lal Masjid siege in 2007. This episode marked a major turning point in that the army operation against the radical mosque in the heart of Islamabad led to militant sectarian groups based in Punjab to turn their firepower on the state alongside those of the Pakhtun militants from the Tribal Areas. The Pakistan Taliban emerged as an umbrella organization for a range of different militant groups.

It is often very hard to gain from the reports of these events an accurate picture of exactly who is behind them. But it seems clear that many of the attacks during the prelude were orchestrated by radical Islamist groups who regarded Musharraf's cooperation with the US and the peace process in Kashmir as a betrayal—some of them are similar to the *spoilers* we discussed earlier. Also, some attacks were no doubt rooted in regional conflicts which have escalated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously the North-West Frontier Province) as a consequence of the war in Afghanistan and the politically volatile situation in Balochistan.

Support for radical Islamist political groups in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the strongest, and has been marked by a decline in authority of the traditional tribal leadership. The state has increasingly encouraged tribal groups to arm themselves against the miltants, and tried to drive a wedge between 'local' militants and 'foreign' groups such as Uzbeks who are linked with Al-Qaeda. In exchange for keeping 'foreign' militant groups out, the tribal groups will enjoy less intrusion by the army. However, this has mainly led to safe havens for Taliban groups in, for example, Waziristan and the complete loss of control of regions like, for example, Swat in 2008 and 2009. As a consequence, Pakistan has been pressured by the US to increase military activity in these regions and it also seems highly probable that the US has given considerable military support directly to these campaigns.[30] In September 2008, the US also admitted to acting directly on Pakistan territory without consent from the government of Pakistan.[31]

While the Pakistan state faces radical Islamic resistance in the tribal belt, there has been an increase of ethnic Baloch militancy in the troubled province of Balochistan. It is one of the most backward

areas in Pakistan, but at the same time it is the richest in natural resources. Demands for higher shares of the revenues from the exploitation of these resources have been made recently by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which consists of several tribal groups, but mainly of Marri tribesmen, and which has increased its militant activities. Also Nawab Akbar Shahbaz Khan Bugti, the brother of the previously mentioned Ahmad Nawaz Bugti has, at least since 2004, been seen by the authorities in Pakistan as the leader of militant factions from Balochistan that have carried out several attacks on the army. In 2006, the central government resorted to stern measures and used the air force to bomb areas in Balochistan where supporters of Bugti were thought to be hiding. Nawab Akbar Shahbaz Khan Bugti was killed on 26 August 2006, probably in one of those air raids. I was in Pakistan at this time and it was striking to observe how many people in Islamabad who would not usually speak favourably of the tribal groups in Balochistan thought that Musharraf had gone too far here. It was clear that although the radical groups in Balochistan were seen as militant, disloyal, quarrelsome, they were still regarded as belonging to the larger family of Pakistan—and these measures were not those that one would take against a family member, as a friend of mine put it.

Two years after the end of military rule, the war in Afghanistan and the conflict involving radical Islamists and Talibans continue to hinder a more substantial strengthening of democratic institutions in Pakistan. Also, the PPP is a severely damaged party after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Although some progress has been made with constitutional reforms that can strengthen civilian and democratic rule, the leadership of President Zardari has become increasingly unpopular and even encouraged dissenting groups within the PPP itself. The government stands accused of corruption, incompetence and being out of touch with the population. This was exemplified for many critics by President Zardari's decision to make state visits to France and the UK during the unprecedented flooding in July 2010. Unfortunately, for the prospects of democratic consolidation, the main opposition party the PML-N also did not exactly cover itself in glory at this time of crisis. Nonetheless, it remains the beneficiary of the PPP's unpopularity. The army has

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however been the main gainer as its response both to the floods and to the insurgencies in Swat and South Waziristan has enabled it to regain the ground it lost with the public in the final period of Musharraf's rule. President Zardari, because of his desire for rapprochement with India, has been unable to use the Kashmir dispute as a rallying cry for a brittle political system. At the same time, the prospects of a 'peace dividend' remain remote as India has not reinvigorated the process of dialogue in the wake of the Mumbai attacks. President Zardari's disappointment with Manmohan Singh in this respect is increasingly palpable. But the Indian Prime Minister has his own domestic political constraints which prevent him from appearing 'soft' on Pakistan. India may at some time in the future re-engage with Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir, but it will do so from a position of strength and in the context of its need to act in order to better project its power beyond the South Asia region. Ironically, this could occur just as likely within the Pakistan domestic context of another military backed regime, than that of the coming together of two democratic countries.

Conclusions

It should be noted that, if not peace, the considerable decline in violence in Kashmir between 2002 and 2012 has been an unanticipated consequence of 9/11. At first, the US involvement in the region seemed to increase the risk of a major war. But after a year of flexing military muscle along the line of control, and when both sides had settled in their cooperation and roles vis-à-vis the US, the consequence was decline of violence in Kashmir—the first in over a decade.[32] And for India this new situation and a new relationship with the rest of the world in general, and the US in particular, has so far worked out rather well. As violence in Kashmir has decreased, India's government has been able to focus on the economy, the needs of the energy sector, and the formation of fresh international alliances.

But the consequences internally for Pakistan, with its central government squeezed between the US and its ambition to control events in Afghanistan at almost any cost, including violations of Pakistan's sovereignty—and a number of groups making political

demands for influence and autonomy—has brought the country to a major crisis.[33] Laporte noted a decade ago that 'In sum, fifty years after its birth, Pakistan remains "a nation in the making".'[34] Talbot made the observation: 'It is nevertheless undeniable that successive bouts of military rule in Pakistan have reinforced centrifugal ethnic, linguistic and regional forces. Difference has not only gone unacknowledged, but there has been a tendency to treat all dissent as a law-and-order rather than a political problem.'[35] Unfortunately, this still holds true today and the geopolitical events have only worsened the situation. It is difficult to imagine how democracy can be built and sustained in Pakistan in the absence of stability within Afghanistan. And how this could be achieved with nothing less than the equivalent of a Marshall Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan is hard to imagine.[36]

This analysis should not lead to the conclusion that the reduction of the Kashmir conflict *in itself* has produced an increased fragmentation in Pakistan and the dissolution of its nationalism. But it can be said that at times the Kashmir conflict has been used, successfully, to bring unity in both Pakistan and India. During times of severe crises between Pakistan and India, the internal conflicts have been laid aside, at least temporarily. When the colonial rulers withdrew, Pakistan and India formed their official nationalisms based on religious and secular identities. Later, these identities were shaped by the conflicts where Kashmir was in the centre. As Ganguly argues: 'Kashmir, as India's only Muslim-majority state, was central to the nation-building enterprise in India. Nehru and other national leaders contended that the existence of a Muslim-majority state in India demonstrated that all faiths could thrive under the aegis of a secular state.'[37] In this, and other ways described here, the Kashmir conflict has had a central role in defining nationalism for over sixty years in India as well as in Pakistan. And when we remove the Kashmir conflict as a factor—some of the vulnerabilities as well as the strengths of these two countries are more clearly exposed. In India, the wars over Kashmir have given fuel to Hindu nationalists and ethnic chauvinism expressed in the conflicts over Ayodhya. But when the Kashmir conflict has subsided it has not, from the Indian point of view, revealed some new can of worms. When we look at Pakistan

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the picture is quite different. So, India is pushing forward more strongly than ever—more than sixty years after independence. And, for Pakistan, the problem is not just peace in Kashmir, but what is revealed behind it.

Notes

1. C. Clausewitz, *On War* (London: David Campbell Publishers, 1976), p. 218.
2. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 141.
3. See I. Talbot, *India and Pakistan* (London: Arnold, 2000); I. Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* 2nd revised edition (London: Hurst, 2009); I. Talbot and G. Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
4. Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 33.
5. See I. Talbot and G. Singh, *The Partition of India*, Chapter 6.
6. See Sten Widmalm, *Kashmir in Comparative Perspective: Democracy and Violent Separatism in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 41–3.
7. C.B. Birdwood, *Two Nations and Kashmir*, (London: Hale, 1956), quoted in Lars Blinkenberg, *India-Pakistan* (Arhus: Munksgaard, 1972), p. 109.
8. This observation is also made and discussed by Blinkenberg, *India-Pakistan*, p. 111.
9. Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru* (London: Collins, 1969), pp. 287–8.
10. See Thomas Perry Thornton, 'Pakistan: Fifty Years of Insecurity', in Selig S. Harrison, Paul H. Kreisberg, and Dennis Kux (eds.), *India and Pakistan: The First Fifty Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 171.
11. For the authoritative exposition of this thesis, see Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
12. For the Indian perspective on the background to the 1965 conflict, see M.J. Akbar, *Kashmir Behind the Vale* (Delhi: Viking, 1991).
13. Paul Titus and Nina Swidler, 'Knights, Not Pawns—Ethno-Nationalism and Regional Dynamics in Post-Colonial Balochistan', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32/ 1 (2000), p. 56.
14. Ibid., p. 57.
15. See Chapters 5 and 6 of Talbot and Singh, *The Partition of India*.
16. See Widmalm, *Kashmir in Comparative Perspective*.
17. Ibid., pp. 54–5.
18. Ibid., pp. 56–61.
19. Vali Nasr, 'National identities and the India-Pakistan Conflict', in T.V. Paul (ed.), *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 183.
20. See for example Adeel Khan, 'Pakistan in 2006: Safe Centre, Dangerous Peripheries', *Asian Survey* 47/ 1 (2007).
21. See Talbot and Singh, *The Partition of India*, p. 136.
22. Ibid., p. 168.
23. Widmalm, *Kashmir in Comparative Perspective* p. 143.

24. Talbot, *India and Pakistan*, p. 194.
25. Nasr, 'National Identities', p. 199.
26. Talbot and Singh, *The Partition of India*, p. 170.
27. Some estimates claim that as many as twenty-five thousand farmers have committed suicide in India since 1997.
28. See for example, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/15/opinion/15iht-edamorim.html
29. See for example, BBC News, 'Free Trade Bid for Emerging World' (2006) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2hi/business/4863866.stm
30. See William M. Arkin, 'A "Secret" Weapon in the War Against Terror?' (*Washington Post*, 2007).
31. See for example http://news.bbc.co.uk/1hi/world/south_asia/7447608.stm
32. Sten Widmalm, 'Indian Devolution,' *Axess 8* (2006). http://www.axess.se/english/2006/08/theme_widmamlm.php
33. See Talbot, *India and Pakistan*, pp. 209–10, 219 for parallels in the way the US has treated Musharraf and Ziaul Haq.
34. Robert Laporte, 'Pakistan: a Nation in the Making', in Selig S. Harrison, Paul H. Kresisberg, and Dennis Kux (eds.), *India and Pakistan: The First Fifty Years* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press 1999).
35. Talbot, *India and Pakistan*, p. 197.
36. Widmalm, 2009.
37. S. Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 38–9.

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9

The Last Governor: Sir Evan Jenkins in the Punjab 1946–47

Nick Lloyd

Little has been written about the role of the provincial governors in the closing period of British rule in India. The emphasis has instead been on that of the viceroys with considerable material on both Wavell and his successor Mountbatten, the final viceroy of India. This chapter however considers the part played by Sir Evan Jenkins who was governor of the Punjab province from 8 April 1946 onwards. He assumed direct rule of the province early in March 1947, when the coalition Unionist Party government resigned. This action along with the Punjab's strategic and crucial role in the division of the subcontinent makes it even more important to understand Jenkins' role. Yet little has been written about his tenure in office and his lengthy and distinguished career in India still awaits its biographer.

Sir Evan Jenkins and the Punjab

This chapter will attempt to redress this balance by focusing on one of the 'missing links' in the history of partition: the last British Governor of the Punjab, Sir Evan Meredith Jenkins (1896–1985).[1]

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Jenkins occupied a position of immense strategic and political importance in the final years of British rule in the subcontinent; what Ramachandra Guha has recently called 'the hottest of hot seats'.[2] After a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service (including being Private Secretary to Lord Wavell), Jenkins was sent to the Punjab on 8 April 1946, and remained in Lahore until the transfer of power to India and Pakistan at midnight on 14/15 August 1947. He was at the storm centre of the unrest and violence that shook India during this period, and which was worst in the Punjab. Jenkins's role in this period, the decisions he took, and his influence on the wider situation at the time, remains absent in most accounts of the partition of India. Jenkins is a minor, isolated figure, only meriting one or two brief inclusions; a faceless bureaucrat who was of relatively minor importance. He does not even have an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

One of the reasons why Jenkins remains relatively unknown is that he refused to become involved in the often acrimonious debates about the last days of the Raj in the years afterwards. During the 1960s, he repeatedly refused requests to speak about his time in the Punjab or to answer questions from writers and historians, quietly spending his retirement at 24 Ashley Gardens, London, and enjoying occasional lunches with old colleagues. Jenkins was the model of an impartial, discreet and devoted civil servant, believing that his duty had been to administer government policy, not to have an opinion on it. In a letter to Leonard Mosley, author of *The Last Days of the Raj* (1961), he wrote the following:

> As I told you I have myself always declined to speak or write about the Transfer of Power because if I did so I might make minor errors of fact (I have only one document relevant to the discussion), and because I am old-fashioned enough to think good relations in the Commonwealth more important than the *amour propre* of individuals, including myself. A controversial account of 1947 by a retired official, based upon information obtained in his former office, would unquestionably annoy members of the Government both here and in India.[3]

Jenkins's discretion proved particularly frustrating for a number of correspondents, who were interested to hear his stories. He refused

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an opportunity to talk at the School of Oriental & African Studies on the Transfer of Power,[4] and politely pushed away the questions on India from an American graduate student, Frederic L. Chase III. In his reply to Mr Chase he stated that 'I was brought up in the old civil service tradition, and consider myself precluded from commenting on events which I dealt with officially. Politicians are free to comment; civil servants are not.'[5]

Jenkins may have been loath to talk about his time in India, but it was of considerable importance. What scattered accounts do exist suggest that Jenkins was an administrator of outstanding ability who quickly earned the respect and admiration of all those who came into contact with him.[6] He had extensive experience of district administration in the Punjab (having worked in eight districts), and from 1931 held various positions in the central government in Delhi, including in the Industry and Labour Department and the Supply Department, before becoming private secretary to the viceroy in 1943. He, therefore, possessed unrivalled knowledge of all levels of the British administration and had (during his time with Lord Wavell) become acquainted with most of the all-India figures who would feature in the discussions over the transfer of power in 1947. Described by *The Times* as 'Perhaps the most brilliant of the last generation of Indian Civil Servants, he combined a prodigious capacity for work with lightning speed in getting to the core of the most complicated political, social, or economic problems.'[7] Lord Wavell, who knew him well, thought very highly of his former private secretary. 'Evan Jenkins has been a great mainstay,' he wrote in his journal, 'and I have leaned heavily on him. His extraordinary capacity for work, clear-headedness, and detailed knowledge have been invaluable, and I could not have got on without him.'[8] Likewise, Mountbatten also paid tribute to the 'admirable work' that Jenkins and 'his faithful band of officials' had performed in the Punjab in his Personal Report of 16 August 1947.[9] More recently, Lawrence James, author of *Raj. The Making and Unmaking of British India* (1997), has contended that 'If there were any heroes of the last days of the Raj Jenkins would deserve a place among them: backed by a weary and often disheartened administration and police force, starved of soldiers and indifferently supported by Mountbatten, he did all that

was humanly possible to prevent a catastrophe which cost hundreds of thousands of lives.' He describes Jenkins as an 'upright, dedicated and thoroughly honourable' man.[10]

These assessments stand in stark contrast with the criticisms which both the Congress and Muslim League raised during his governorship. Indeed it may be because of these controversies that Jenkins was reluctant to reflect on his role in 1947 during his retirement. The Muslim League was particularly hostile to his governorship, accusing him of being tyrannical and anti-Muslim because he refused to support a Muslim League ministry in the province following the resignation of the Unionists.[11] Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, criticized Jenkins over the deteriorating law and order situation in the Punjab. The province, which had once been run by a non-communal unionist ministry, gradually descended into what Jenkins described as a 'communal war of succession'.[12] Nehru accused the British of indifference, laziness and being eager to see Indians fight it out for themselves.[13] The Congress Party made numerous approaches to Mountbatten to urge Jenkins to take more draconian measures such as the introduction of martial law. His refusal left him open to accusations that he either did not care about the suffering in the Punjab, or was too tired or incompetent to deal with it. These accusations were all the more potent because the province was under direct governor's rule.

Jenkins was the last in a long line of British rulers of the Punjab, taking his place alongside legendary figures such as John Lawrence, Henry Durand, Michael O'Dwyer, and Malcolm Hailey. These men had been steeped in the paternal tradition that defined imperial rule in this part of India, a style of rule that concentrated power in the hands of a small, select elite, was highly militarized, deeply ideological, and interventionist.[14] Jenkins shared many of the paternalist assumptions of his predecessors, such as the importance of maintaining a stable rural base in the Punjab (which would manifest itself in his staunch support for the Unionist Party), but he was no die-hard ideologue. He always understood that the British were leaving India and that there could be no return to the old model of provincial administration. He even managed to persuade his younger brother, Owain, against

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applying to the ICS, arguing that he would not see out a full career in India because independence was coming.[15]

Whereas the Punjab had once been famed for its stability and lack of political interest, when Jenkins arrived the province was in turmoil. Provincial elections had been announced on 24 February 1946, and were a fatal blow to the political consensus that had endured for decades. The Unionist Party, which had dominated Punjabi politics since 1923, had been heavily defeated. This was a coalition of landowning elites; staunch allies of the British, who were committed to maintaining their connections to the Raj and ruling on non-communal lines.[16] Now the Muslim League was the biggest single party, clearly demonstrating the strength of the demand for a separate Muslim homeland of Pakistan. The Muslim League had gained over 32 per cent of the vote, giving it seventy-five seats in the Assembly, but not enough to form a majority. The Unionists had only twenty-one seats, the Congress fifty-one, and the Panthic Sikhs twenty-one. Seven seats went to Independents.[17] The Unionists were able to cobble together a coalition with the Congress Party and the Sikhs, but this could not mask the fact that the Unionist Party was in terminal decline. It was too closely associated with unpopular wartime measures and had been unable to mobilize its support and counter the spread of Muslim League activists in the rural areas of the Punjab.[18]

While Jenkins believed that a cross-community government was crucial to the Punjab's stability he was unimpressed with the Unionist Ministry which greeted his arrival as governor. 'The Ministers', he complained, in his first report to Lord Wavell 'are not a happy team.' He found Khizr Tiwana, the Premier of the Punjab and leader of the Unionist Party, 'as friendly and charming as ever', but grumbling about the lack of support given to moderate politicians.[19] Jenkins was particularly worried about the lack of administrative experience of his ministers and feared this would lead to trouble. *Nawab* Sir Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash (Revenue) 'had a good deal of experience of local administration', but this was an exception to the rule. Muhammad Ibrahim Barq (Education) had 'very little experience of any kind'; Bhim Sen Sachar (Finance) was 'mild and well-meaning' but 'entirely without administrative experience'; and it was 'doubtful'

whether Chaudhri Lahri Singh (Public Works), would 'count for very much'. Jenkins warned Wavell that the 'comparative calm' of the Punjab was 'certainly deceptive' and that extreme care would have to be taken to prevent the situation from getting out of control.[20]

At the end of August 1946, when Jenkins had been in Lahore for five months, he submitted another appreciation of the situation to Wavell.[21] It made for gloomy reading and reflected the political mood in the aftermath of the failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan.[22] The Muslims were 'frightened and angry', fearful that the formation of the interim government was an 'unconditional surrender' to the Hindus and would signal the beginning of the 'systematic repression' of Muslims all over India. At the same time, those 'loyalist' families who had previously supported the British now found themselves for the first time in 'open revolt' against their former partners. The Hindus, on the other hand, were 'jubilant—they are bad winners, and will do all they can to taunt and humiliate the Muslims' and were confident that with British help they would be able to suppress them once and for all. Finally, the attitude of the Sikhs was 'still uncertain'. They were divided into three groups, but the tone of the Sikh press and their speakers was both anti-Muslim and anti-British. Jenkins warned Wavell that in the Punjab there was material 'for a vast communal upheaval'.

What then could be done in such an unpromising situation? Jenkins believed that the Punjab needed a government which represented 'all three communities, strongly supported in the Assembly, and with a marked rural bias'; either a coalition based 'on genuine common interest' or a 'revived and strengthened' Unionist Party. Unfortunately, the Coalition Ministry was 'most unstable', commanding a bare majority in the Assembly and 'under constant attack from the only organized following it has, and at least two subversive parties preaching violence . . . and flouting the authorities more or less unchecked.' Jenkins worried about the weakness of the Coalition Ministry and feared that authority in the Punjab 'has never been at a lower ebb'. He complained that the District Officers were demoralized by the fact that many of those who were defying the law and promoting disturbances were followers of the main parties and any proceedings against them were bound to fail. Jenkins

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recommended the following steps: an immediate effort to deal with the communal press; 'stringent action against all violent speakers'; the suppression of private armies; the suppression of lawlessness of all kinds; and full support for any action taken by District Officers. Although his ministers agreed that these actions would help, there was little chance that they would summon the resolve or courage to undertake them.

One of the most regular subjects in Jenkins's letters was the position of the Sikhs. As early as 21 May 1946 (when the Cabinet Mission's proposals were being circulated) Jenkins warned that 'We may have serious trouble with the Sikhs, who are intensely obstinate and formidable when aroused to common action.'[23] Jenkins held numerous discussions with a variety of Sikh politicians throughout this period, but never got very far, largely owing to the internal stresses and disagreements within the Sikh community. He complained that they were 'riddled with personal factions and feuds' and 'no section of the community wishes to be less truculent and uncompromising than the rest'.[24] He was particularly unimpressed by Master Tara Singh, the firebrand Sikh leader who would later stand on the steps of the Punjab Legislative Assembly—*kirpan* in hand—and shout 'death to Pakistan'. After one of his periodic meetings with the Sikh leader, Jenkins noted that he was 'quite amiable, but incoherent and obstinate as usual' and that it was unfortunate that at such an important time, affairs in the Punjab should be in the hands of an 'eccentric old man'.[25] Jenkins repeatedly urged the Sikhs to take a moderate line and to strike a bargain with one of the other communities for representation and safeguards in any future constitutional settlement. He did, however, warn of 'a kind of competitive intemperance among the Sikh leaders which I have always found it very difficult to deal with.' Jenkins was convinced that it was possible that the Sikhs would be 'courted' by both the Muslims and Hindus, 'but they do not see this, and in the Punjab at least they are in a position to wreck the plan'. He accused them of 'flirting with the Muslims, frightening the Hindus and abusing the British' to get more than they otherwise could. Jenkins doubted that this was the right course of action.[26]

Jenkins believed that the Sikhs must be helped as far as possible, because although they were a small minority in India, their greater numbers in the Punjab meant that they could not be overlooked. On 29 May 1946, he wired an urgent telegram to Wavell, urging an 'immediate and serious attempt to conciliate [the] Sikhs. As [a] compact religious community confined to one group and without hope of all-India influence they have reasonable apprehensions and their sense of grievance is real and urgent. . . . More practical reason for action is that in the Punjab Sikhs could wreck any scheme of which they really disapproved.'[27] Jenkins would repeat the substance of this telegram many times. Although he found many Sikh politicians to be both unreasonable and unhelpful, he understood their grievances (particularly against Muslims) and felt that some concessions had to be made to wean them off immoderate appeals for violence. 'I am in favour of helping them, if possible,' he wrote to Wavell, 'because their position in the Punjab makes them temporarily of some all-India importance.'[28] Unless they could be appeased, Jenkins feared they would take their revenge. Unfortunately, he was to be proved right.

In the aftermath of partition, one of the most contentious topics was whether the slaughter could have been foreseen, and therefore, prevented. Although (as this chapter will argue) Jenkins did as much as he could to contain the situation, there are still wider questions over the policy adopted by the Labour Government and Lord Mountbatten in the spring and summer of 1947 to withdraw from India as quickly as they did. When asked if he had ignored the warnings that 'the Punjab was going to erupt', Lord Mountbatten denied that this was the case. 'Neither Jenkins nor Abell [Private Secretary to the Viceroy] ever foresaw the eruption on the scale and the lines it took place. They foresaw trouble. . . . I listened to their warnings. . . . What went wrong was the sheer simultaneous mass reaction which nobody foresaw.'[29] On the contrary, the available documentation on the Punjab supports the contention that Jenkins *did* foresee an unprecedented level of upheaval and violence. His letters to Mountbatten and the fortnightly reports from Lahore are full of dire warnings about this, particularly regarding the Sikhs.[30] Andrew Roberts has claimed that there were at least 'twenty-three

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predictions, reports and warnings' sent by Jenkins that Mountbatten ignored.[31] The Viceroy was clearly preoccupied with trying to reconcile the Congress and Muslim League at the All-India level, but the warnings that Jenkins gave about the Punjab point to the conclusion that the often pilloried governors were far more knowledgeable about India than Mountbatten or the Labour Government gave them credit for. In any case, had Mountbatten taken Jenkins's warnings more seriously, and made more of a concerted effort to assuage Sikh concern, it is likely that the transfer of power would not have been accompanied by such desperate violence on the part of the Sikh *jathas*.

Jenkins and the Introduction of Governor's Rule

Jenkins' decision to introduce governor's rule rather than to allow the opposition Muslim League to take office following Khizr's resignation was as highly controversial at the provincial sphere as were some of Mountbatten's decisions at the All-India level. Indeed, the denial of responsible office for the League could be deemed as significant in creating the conditions for violence as the acceleration of the British departure. Yet the spotlight of critics of the Raj has been firmly turned on Mountbatten rather than the Punjab governor. It could be argued that neither British official had the room for manoeuvre their opponents maintain and that their decisions were reactive to the deteriorating situation and highly polarized political outlooks of the main parties and their provincial organizations.

The resignation of Khizr Tiwana was a devastating blow to Jenkins's hopes of maintaining communal unity in the province.[32] He was always committed to the unionist ideal and was convinced that any alternative would only bring ruin and terror, pressing this point long into the summer of 1947, when arguably, any chance of a return to Unionism, in the Punjab or elsewhere, had long since passed.[33] Jenkins also realized that the announcement of 20 February had 'radically changed' his position. The party leaders were beginning to realize that he would 'soon cease to count' and he feared that constitutional discussions would be abandoned and there would be 'attempts to establish Muslim or Sikh rule by force'.[34] His first

responsibility was to arrange for a new ministry to take office. On 3 March, Jenkins met with the leader of the Punjab Muslim League, Iftikhar Husain Khan (the *Nawab* of Mamdot), and charged him with the duty of forming a Ministry. Jenkins warned Mamdot that in his judgement 'no Ministry formed by one community . . . could last for more than a few weeks'. He told him that he could expect the Hindus and Sikhs, particularly the Sikhs, to be 'indignant and hostile', and that he must do what he could to come to terms with them.[35]

As perhaps was to be expected, Mamdot maintained that he could command a majority of ninety members and had no reason to doubt the strength of his support from various groups outside his party. Mamdot's proposed Ministry consisted of eighty members of the Muslim League, plus three other Muslim members, four members of the Scheduled Castes, one European and two Indian Christians, but of course, no support from either the Congress or the Sikhs. When Jenkins suggested that this would fail because the Hindus and Sikhs would not support it, Mamdot protested that the only fair thing to do was to give his proposed Ministry a chance to work. 'Normal constitutional procedure should not, however,' he wrote, 'be deviated from because of the presence of a theoretical risk of this nature.'[36]

Jenkins remained unconvinced. He wrote to Mamdot on 5 March and informed him that he could not accept the 'very general assurance' that Mamdot commanded a majority and required a signed statement by those members who were not from the Muslim League that they supported Mamdot before the Ministry could be formed. Furthermore, Jenkins made a proclamation under Section 93 (with the approval of the viceroy) that he would take over until a Ministry could be formed. 'I need hardly say that I consider the early establishment of a stable Ministry in the Punjab most important', Jenkins added, hoping that Mamdot could provide more details of his majority in the next few weeks. 'I can assure you that the risks involved in any hasty action are anything but theoretical', he wrote, 'they are as grave as could well be imagined.' Finally, Jenkins told Mamdot that only a government that could command the confidence of 'Punjabis generally' would help solve the present difficulties. He urged Mamdot to use the additional time to resume negotiations with the other communities and try to come to some agreement.[37] But

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this was unlikely. Jenkins had been assured by non-Muslim politicians that cooperation would not be possible with the Muslim League.[38] In the face of deadlock, Jenkins acted.

The Muslim League thereafter harboured anger and a sense of injustice towards Jenkins about the introduction of Section 93. On 15 April, Liaquat Ali Khan wrote a blazing letter to Lord Mountbatten in which he excoriated Jenkins, accused him of bias and asked for the viceroy's intervention. He believed Jenkins adopted 'an attitude of hostility towards Muslims', indiscriminately arresting innocent people and allowing Hindu and Sikh leaders to make 'the most provocative and aggressive speeches' while Muslim leaders were banned. 'Any impartial assessment of the position in the Punjab leads one to the inescapable conclusion', he added, 'that the Governor and his subordinates want to foster chaos in the province.'[39] Such sentiments were echoed in the Punjab's Muslim newspapers, particularly *Dawn*, which (on 14 May) referred to Jenkins as 'an oppressive tyrant' and accused him of 'anti-Muslim censorship', which was presumably because he was part of some kind of 'Anglo-Hindu-Sikh regime'.[40]

The accusation that Jenkins was somehow anti-Muslim or (as Liaquat Ali Khan would claim) wanted to 'foster chaos' in the Punjab is difficult to credit. Ironically, at the same time he was also being criticized by the defence minister (Baldev Singh) for being pro-Muslim. Baldev Singh, the defence minister complained to Wavell on 11 March that 'the police and the administration generally stood literally aside' and took no action against the Muslim League, whereas there was 'a marked discrimination against Hindu and Sikh demonstrators'.[41]

Jenkins was certainly suspicious and critical of the Muslim League, but this was understandable given his belief in a Unionist ministry and his contention that no one religious community could rule without the cooperation, or at least tacit acceptance, of the others. The prospect of a Muslim Raj had precipitated violence in Lahore and Amritsar which then expanded to include large rural tracts of the Rawalpindi Division. In these areas, Jenkins noted, 'there has been extreme savagery', and he repeated several stories that he had heard—of non-Muslims being lured into 'peace committees' and then

murdered, of children with their hands cut off, and so on. All these atrocities were spurred on by rumours and great fears, although some were undoubtedly pre-planned. This violence led the Congress and the Akali Dal to demand that Punjab be divided in the event of the creation of Pakistan.

In truth, Jenkins had little choice in introducing Section 93. He was convinced that if the Muslim League were to take office then there would be an 'immediate Sikh rising with Hindu support' and given what would later happen in the province, this claim was both reasonable and far-sighted. Then there would be civil war for possession of the Punjab. 'I am not clear how or at what stage we could extract ourselves', he wrote to Wavell. 'Constitution[al] niceties no longer matter since we are approaching final struggle for power.' Jenkins believed that only a Section 93 administration could work as long as it was backed up by force and renewed attempts at mediation.[42] Yet this was not a popular decision. The historian, G.D. Kholsa, has criticized the introduction of Section 93 because it apparently 'did not improve the situation and in no way helped to check the terror which had been let loose by the Muslims', but this is to miss the point.[43] Section 93 was a decision that Jenkins was loathe to take. It was intended to provide some stability in the province, and even if it did nothing to check Muslim rioters, then at least its introduction assured the Hindus and Sikhs that they would not be subject to undiluted Muslim rule. Jenkins did not decide to rule by decree because he was thirsty for power or some kind of 'oppressive tyrant' as *Dawn* would have us believe. He was, on the contrary, fully aware of the changing constitutional structure of the Indian Empire and accepting of it.[44] Jenkins was a reluctant governor at this point, criticized by all sides but carrying on as best he could, convinced that only a Section 93 administration could maintain some level of law and order in the province. It was somewhat ironic, therefore, that a man who had always been aware of the winds of change blowing through the Raj would spend his final days in office running the province like his predecessors had done in the 1840s.

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The Deteriorating Law and Order Situation in Punjab

If the Muslim League criticized Jenkins for the introduction of Section 93, the Congress and the Akalis criticized him for the growing violence in the Punjab. This became endemic in cities such as Lahore and Amritsar from March 1947 onwards. It was accompanied by ominous preparations for future conflict by armed organizations. The Punjab's deterioration formed the backdrop to the All-India decision to divide the subcontinent when the British left. The 3 June Partition Plan did not still the unease, but rather created a new dimension of instability and uncertainty as to the future boundaries of the Punjab.

British troops eventually brought the situation under control in the Rawalpindi Division. The Sikh refugees who fled to the safety of the Amritsar district were to harbour thoughts of future revenge. The tense situation was made worse by the number of visits from senior politicians, Jenkins even calling them 'a great plague'. He believed that they were not helpful, and only added more discontent by spreading stories, rumours, and unsubstantiated claims, and tying up harassed officials all day.

The restoration of some kind of order in the Punjab coincided with the arrival of the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten. Jenkins had enjoyed a cordial relationship with his predecessor, and it would have been understandable if he had been anxious or apprehensive at the arrival of a man who had a reputation as a movie-star and a man of action. But if he did, Jenkins never let it show and the two men got on well. The story of Mountbatten's viceroyalty is well-known in its essential points.[45] The new viceroy did not want to divide India, but quickly came to the conclusion that this was necessary to break the political deadlock and ensure a speedy British withdrawal from India. It was nonetheless a fraught process until he secured the Indian leaders' support for the 3 June Partition Plan. He then announced the British would be leaving by 15 August, not the end of June 1948 as earlier stated by Attlee.

The machinery of partition included the creation of a Boundary Force, a Boundary Commission chaired by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, and a Partition Council to oversee the division of assets. Growing violence

in the Punjab formed a troubling backdrop to these administrative arrangements. In an attempt to stake a claim to hegemony in Lahore in advance of any boundary award, arson attacks on Hindu properties in the city intensified during June 1947. The deteriorating situation in such cities as Lahore, Amritsar, and Multan led Nehru to level damning accusations against the British administration. On the morning of 16 June, the *Tribune* in Lahore published a transcript of a speech he had given to the All Indian Congress Committee the previous day. In this speech Nehru expressed his 'horror and disgust' and said that the administration had 'broken down'. Furthermore:

> How was it, he asked, that British officers who coped with civil disobedience movements in the past were unable to cope with the present disturbances? Where there were Congress ministries, disturbances were brought under control but where the British exercised authority there was chaos. In the Punjab where there was cent per cent [sic] British rule, Pandit Nehru said, despite the efforts of certain senior officers, murders and arson continued. The trouble was prevalent the most where there were British officers in charge and divisions under the control of either Hindu or Muslim officers were comparatively quiet. The Interim Government was able to do nothing to protect the people.

Nehru made seven main criticisms: that the British failed to deal with disorders of 1947 but were able to crush those of 1942; that British officials had been 'callous and incompetent'; that in the Punjab the worst districts were those staffed by British officials; that 'Congress Governments had no difficulty in suppressing disturbances'; that the fire services had been 'inefficient and useless'; that the Magistrates and Police had been 'incompetent and partial'; and that martial law should have been declared'.[46] He added that the British were 'no longer interested because they were leaving', telling those who came to them for help that they should go to see Nehru and Patel instead.[47]

So fierce did the criticism become that Mountbatten eventually asked Jenkins to prepare a memorandum on the Punjab government's handling of the disturbances on 20 July.[48] It was unfortunate that during this difficult time, when Jenkins was dealing with the vast administrative responsibilities of partitioning the Punjab, he had to write a lengthy paper defending the actions that he and his

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subordinates had taken. He undoubtedly found it tiring and depressing. He was particularly incensed at Nehru's remarks, and wrote to Mountbatten as soon as he read them, alerting the viceroy to the statements and arguing that Nehru was wrong 'both in his facts and in his reasoning'. Indeed, it is difficult to argue with Jenkins's logic on this matter. Firstly, previous civil disobedience movements were completely different to the widespread fighting between communities that was now taking place in the Punjab. What was more, such disturbances were taking place across India, including in Bombay, Bihar, and the NWFP, all of which were under *Congress* governments. Jenkins pointed out that it was not just British officials who were in charge in the disturbed areas, adding that in Multan and Lahore, the commissioners were both Indian, as was the deputy inspector general of Police in Multan, and so on. Furthermore, it was a long-standing policy to send British officials 'to the districts most likely to give trouble' and 'to suggest that the Deputy Commissioners of Lahore and Amritsar [who were British] have stimulated or connived at communal trouble is manifest rubbish.' Finally, he warned the viceroy that as Nehru was not only the leader of a political party, but also Vice-President of Your Excellency's Executive Council, his views mattered. 'I should be glad to know', Jenkins asked, 'how far his views are endorsed by His Majesty's Government and Your Excellency. I do not think His Majesty's Government can expect their British servants in India to remain in office until the transfer of power unless they are able to protect themselves from official onslaughts of this description.'[49]

Given Mountbatten's position he clearly could not endorse Nehru's criticisms, but he was fond of Nehru and did not want to threaten their relationship.[50] He sent a lukewarm reply to Jenkins on 19 June, throwing out the allegations (describing them as 'completely absurd'), but telling him that 'Nehru's goodwill is essential to me in this critical transition period.' What was more, 'He is appallingly overworked, is liable to lose his temper and generally shows many signs of extreme strain. I shall mention this speech to him at the right moment, but I am sure you will appreciate that I cannot hope to achieve very much.'[51] Mountbatten's reply was symptomatic of his earnest desire to secure and maintain Nehru's 'goodwill' at this point,

but was little help to the harassed administration in Lahore. Sadly, it would not be the first time that Mountbatten would ignore or play-down politically-motivated attacks on the administration in the run-up to partition, contributing still further to the ebb of British authority and power in this crucial province.

Jinnah was also becoming alarmed at the communal violence, and although not going as far as Nehru, felt that the authorities were not doing enough to stamp it out. The President of the Muslim League spoke with Mountbatten on the evening of 23 June and begged him to be 'utterly ruthless' in suppressing the trouble in Lahore and Amritsar. Apparently, he even told Mountbatten that 'I don't care whether you shoot Moslems or not, it has got to be stopped'. The following day, Nehru saw Mountbatten and told him much the same thing. Nehru wanted three things to happen. Firstly, martial law should be declared in Amritsar, Lahore, and anywhere else that was unsettled. Secondly, the military should be placed in charge of the entire operation, while the police were withdrawn for rest and recuperation. Thirdly, the troops 'should be empowered to be utterly ruthless and to shoot at sight'. Mountbatten forwarded these remarks to Jenkins and told him that something must be done.[52]

Jenkins was unimpressed by these knee-jerk, somewhat panicky, reactions. He spoke with the Commander of Lahore Area and the Inspector-General of Police (as well as with the party leaders), and came to the conclusion that Nehru's proposals were not realistic, practical or helpful. He admitted that the situation was causing 'grave anxiety', but felt that martial law was not the answer. The police were tired and the other services were 'disintegrating'. He believed that the only solution lay in 'active intervention' by the political leaders, who had influence with those gangs and 'violent elements' who were carrying out the attacks. He had evidence that the Muslim League had ordered Muslim mobs to burn buildings and attack Hindus and that the Hindu militant organization, the RSS, was behind most of the 'Hindu bombing'. Only if political leaders were willing to take a decisive stand against such disorder would violence come to an end.[53] But this was unlikely to happen and the leaders of all sides were deeply reluctant to admit that it was their followers who caused violent incidents. It was far easier to rail against Jenkins and demand

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the introduction of martial law than deal with the real causes of violence.

Jenkins was in a difficult situation and these calls for 'utter ruthlessness' would return to haunt him again and again. Preventing communal violence was a far more challenging task than breaking up anti-government riots and simply engaging in wanton bloodshed could have generated yet further hostility towards the British government, something Jenkins was keen to avoid.[54] As Simeon Shoul has argued, the 'key difference between political and communal riots was that in a political, anti-British protest, even if the methods were passive, the protestors or rioters usually operated in a cohesive group'. Communal riots, on the contrary, may have begun with some kind of confrontation, but then would 'degenerate into a series of back-alley skirmishes, and hit and run attacks'.[55] In Lahore, Jenkins complained that the 'burning and stabbing' was not well understood. 'We seldom saw or apprehended the offenders—an assassin does not stab his victim without choosing his moment carefully, and the incendiarists threw their fireballs through windows and sky-lights making full use of the rooftops and the maze of narrow city lanes.' Although Jenkins and the police tried to stop this by placing officers on the roofs, this would usually fail and they would be distracted by other murders elsewhere in the city. This would then spark off a new round of revenge attacks, usually by Hindus and Sikhs, who began to use bombs in greater numbers from 10 June.[56] With water in short supply, fires were a constant danger. One British official even found—to his horror—that snipers were being placed on the rooftops and shooting at the police and fire-services and effectively preventing help from arriving in time.[57]

Jenkins reiterated that decisive action was impossible against such a spread of disorder, particularly with the tools available. The workings of justice were grinding to a halt and becoming infected with communal feeling. It is unclear how many people were arrested in the final days of British rule in the Punjab—there were over two thousand people arrested in Multan alone—but processing these cases was virtually impossible. As was to be expected, those who had been accused of crimes did everything they could to delay their cases until after the transfer of power, which meant that magistrates made

little attempt to complete them.[58] More ominously, the services were 'now beginning to disintegrate', with officers being increasingly drawn into the communal struggle and siding with their co-religionists in any matter. As to who was responsible for the outrages, Jenkins believed that in Lahore the Muslim League 'approved, and in some degree directed' many of the acts of burning and incendiarism, but he had no doubt that the other main political parties were also involved. 'I do not mean that Jinnah, Nehru, and Patel or even Mamdot and Sachar personally abet murder and/or arson', Jenkins added, 'But somewhere connected with the Party organizations here there are people who control the campaign and are given the money to do so.'[59]

Nehru and Jinnah were both adamant that the first step to restore order should be the introduction of martial law throughout the Punjab, but Jenkins disagreed. Given the charged political atmosphere and the furore that had been whipped up following a previous incarnation (during the Punjab disturbances of 1919),[60] Jenkins's reluctance to bring in martial law was understandable. Yet, it should not be thought that he was unwilling to do everything he could to stop the violence. On the contrary, during the spring of 1947, the government of the Punjab made heroic efforts to maintain law and order and support the police and military. A shortage of troops was, however, a constant problem. Jenkins wanted to increase the presence of police and military units in the urban centres by more patrolling, but this was difficult to do with an over-stretched and tired police-force that was under intense communal pressure. On 21 May, he appealed to Mountbatten for another complete brigade to operate in greater Lahore because the police were 'already tired and less effective than it was a few days ago'.[61] Unfortunately, his request was not heeded. After talking with Baldev Singh, Mountbatten decided that no more troops (other than 4th Indian Division, which would become the main part of the Punjab Boundary Force) could be spared from 'the small reserve of troops'.[62] Jenkins would have to make do.

As well as calling for more troops, Jenkins brought in legislation that was aimed at strengthening the hand of the police and these—as he never tired of pointing out—virtually replicated any steps that could have been taken under martial law. On 19 March, the Punjab

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Disturbed Areas Act was passed. Any persons committing a crime in a 'disturbed area' (which at this point extended to the whole of the Punjab) punishable under the Indian Penal Code could be punished with death, and magistrates could fire upon anyone engaged in acts contrary to the law.[63] The following day the Punjab Public Safety Act came into force. This allowed the authorities to ban anyone from any specific area (or force them to remain there); close any institution or take possession of any land or building as required; prohibit the publication of any documents or newspapers prejudicial to public safety; fix prices of any commodities; dismiss anyone working in transport, sanitation, industry, or business; regulate, restrict or prohibit the use of any vehicle; enter and search any place; fix the compensation to be paid to those who had lost family members; and prohibit the carrying of weapons.[64] It is difficult to see what further legislation could have been put in place or what extra provisions martial law would have brought. It may have even made the situation worse. It could have potentially ignited popular protest and would have made it difficult to return to a civilian administration (because it could only be withdrawn if the situation improved, which was unlikely).

The decision not to order martial law remains one of Jenkins's most controversial decisions and has been seized upon by critics of the authorities as yet further evidence that the British were not really interested in stopping the violence. Stanley Wolpert's *Shameful Flight* (2006) states that 'instead of risking the humiliation of exposure before "Natives", they retained the pretense and illusion of impervious power and failed to act, biding their time until their return to Britain'.[65] Yet, this criticism fails to appreciate what was happening in the Punjab during this period. The 'pretense and illusion of impervious power' had already gone; the declaration of martial law would not, in any case, have mitigated any of the factors that were causing the violence and would have been meaningless without sufficient numbers of police (who were unaffected by communalism) and a committed government in Delhi. Jenkins's time in the Punjab was undoubtedly short, but a close examination of his actions highlights how difficult—if not impossible—restoring order was in such inauspicious circumstances. It was not just the physical

and logistical difficulty of getting enough reliable troops and police into the right position at the right time to take decisive action, either to engage rioters or deter further attacks, but the poisonous atmosphere in which such activities took place. Whatever decisions Jenkins made, they would immediately be seized upon by one community or another and trumpeted as an example of bias, putting an even greater strain on his over-taxed and communally fragile police force and making any declaration of martial law essentially meaningless.

The tone of the press was a source of constant complaint. Jenkins had wanted something to be done against *Dawn* as early as February 1947, but Wavell 'thought there was no sufficient justification for doing so'.[66] Even when the authorities wanted measures to be put in place against certain publications, the bureaucratic hurdles that had to be jumped often prevented any meaningful action. A provincial fortnightly report of May 1947 stated that communal newspapers had 'thrown restraint away' and were indulging in the 'most bitter mutual recrimination'.[67] On 21 June, *Dawn* published allegations of 'grave irregularities' by the police in Lahore, stating that they had attacked men without justification and also abused women. The government believed that the article brought it into contempt, but after taking legal advice it was reluctantly agreed that the piece contained 'no comment or criticism or abuse of or attack on Government' and unless they could challenge the 'good faith' of the article, no action could be taken.[68] The government of the Punjab could warn and threaten, but this was relatively ineffective in such a heightened atmosphere. Lahore banned the publication of numerous newspapers and issued pre-censorship orders (so that they could check content before it was published), but violations were 'by no means uncommon', meaning that legal action had to be taken, but this, of course, took time.[69]

Authority and Power

Fighting against despondency and fatalism, Jenkins and his staff did what they could, ordering a number of operations aimed at interrupting the flow of weapons and reinforcing governmental

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authority, but always receiving heavy criticism for doing so. A number of examples illustrate the kind of problems Jenkins faced. One way of punishing misdemeanours was the introduction of large collective fines on those areas that had witnessed disorders. The money raised would then be given as compensation to the families of those who had been killed or wounded. In Multan, a large collective fine was levied in the aftermath of the disturbances of March 1947, but, like many others, it proved extremely troublesome to administer and collect. The Deputy Commissioner, A.J.V. Arthur, complained that the 'system of assessment took a staff of fifty clerks three months to work out and it was not possible to start recovering the collective fine until the beginning of July'. With the transfer of power then imminent, it was little surprise that many people tried to delay payment in the hope that it would be cancelled after 15 August. Further adding to the difficulties of this was the issuing of an (illegal) injunction against the collection of the fine on Muslims by the Sub-Judge of Multan, Sheikh Mohammed Akbar.[70] Although Arthur appealed against this, he was told by government to avoid any 'incident' at Multan and there the matter ended. By 2 August, Arthur had collected only 130,000 rupees out of a total fine of one million rupees; eloquent testimony to the failure of this policy.

There were a number of other ways by which Jenkins and his officers tried to restore law and order, but once again, any action they took would displease one community or another. The first was to inflict heavy casualties on those responsible for the disorders, whether they were rioters, arsonists or heavily armed *jathas*, but the British found repression on such a scale to be both difficult and distasteful. In the urban areas, where it was much more difficult to inflict such casualties, it was vital to impress upon the population the power of the police and try to cut off the flow of weapons. On 30 June, a raid was ordered in the Misri Shah suburb of Lahore, a predominantly Muslim area in the northern outskirts of the city.[71] Jenkins had received intelligence that many of the attacks on Hindus and Sikhs originated in this area, so had agreed to conduct a raid. The location was sealed off with barbed wire and troops went in and searched all the houses. Unfortunately, no major caches of arms were found, which prompted an angry response from the local Muslim

leaders.[72] The *Nawab* of Mamdot was 'particularly sore' about the action of the police, and was 'full of stories about non-Muslim plots to sabotage canal headworks and to import arms'.[73]

On the evening of 2 July, after sending another angry letter to Jenkins, in which he criticized Jenkins's 'unwarranted attack upon a peaceful and law abiding Muslim locality', Mamdot made four demands. He wanted two more Muslims on the panel of the Security Council (to achieve parity with non-Muslims); all 'repressive and oppressive administrative measures' must stop; if such measures had to be employed, they should only go ahead after approval from the Security Council; and there should be complete parity of Muslim and non-Muslim officers in the Special Police Control staff.[74] Jenkins tried to cooperate, but noted that he would have to secure the agreement of the other (Hindu and Sikh) leaders about the inclusion of two more Muslims. Jenkins added that the second and third demands could be considered by the Committee, and that he would enquire about the fourth demand.[75] In protest, Mamdot resigned from the Security Committee. Jenkins wearily informed Mountbatten the following morning before adding a few points contesting Mamdot's interpretation of events. In his opinion, the Muslims were not innocent in the unrest, and that in any case, there was a greater proportion of Muslims in the population than Hindus and Sikhs. Furthermore, he failed to understand Mamdot's attitude given Jinnah's earlier call for 'utter ruthlessness' in the suppression of disorder.

It was not just the Muslims who were causing problems. The role of the Sikhs in the violence in the Punjab is generally well-recognized and fulfilled the dire prophecies that Jenkins had been making since the previous year.[76] The governor had heard word that a large Sikh *diwan* had been arranged for 27 July at Nankana Sahib, in Sheikhupura district, when numerous leading Sikhs had been advertised as speaking. All public meetings had been prohibited in the district, and Jenkins was worried that the meeting would be an excuse for Sikhs to arm and come to the meeting in *jathas*. Jenkins wanted to prevent it, but knew that if he did so, then it could make the situation worse. It was a question of how to enforce law and order without 'provoking a large-scale physical clash with the Sikhs' especially near a temple.[77] Two days later, he summoned Sardar

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Swaran Singh (a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and Secretary of the Panthic Party) and asked him about the *diwan*. Jenkins found Singh 'distinctly evasive'. He tried to calm Jenkins's nerves by saying that he was not expecting many people to turn up, but the governor was having none of it. He was worried that communal feeling would be increased at the meeting and that there would be clashes with Muslim villagers nearby.[78] Jenkins made sure the police and army were out in force, guarding the approaches to the *gurdwara* with two cordons, spreading word that the meeting was illegal, suspending buses and stopping the sale of railway tickets. Nevertheless, Jenkins estimated that around 1,500 to 2,000 villagers turned up. They listened to some speeches and began to prepare themselves for civil disobedience. The following morning, 28 July, the police were again out in force. Although Jenkins had steeled himself for a clash, the day was quiet. The Sikhs dispersed peacefully and Jenkins was finally able to withdraw his police. He was pleased that they had achieved their objective and made a point about illegal gatherings.[79]

One of the most difficult decisions Jenkins had to make was what to do about a number of Sikh leaders who were becoming increasingly restive. As he had warned in May 1946, if the Sikhs were not appeased, they would disrupt any political settlement in the Punjab. Sir George Abell had telegraphed Jenkins on 4 August informing him that Mountbatten felt it necessary to arrest Tara Singh ' . . . the most hot headed of the Sikhs', and asking for Jenkins's opinion.[80] The viceroy had been given information by Captain Gerald Savage of the Punjab CID (whom Jenkins had sent to Delhi) that Tara Singh was 'completely one-track on the subject of revenge on Muslims', who was collecting arms, ordering attacks on trains, and calling for the assassination of Mr Jinnah.[81] It was only now, in August 1947, that Mountbatten seems to have understood the importance of the Sikhs to any settlement in the Punjab and the likely consequences if they were unhappy, but unfortunately his sudden concern was too little, too late.

After discussions with his staff, Jenkins was reluctant to arrest Tara Singh, particularly with the announcement of Sir Cyril Radcliffe's Boundary Commission's Award being so close. Although he believed

that Savage was correct, he felt that an arrest might worsen the situation. First of all, it would be difficult to arrest Tara Singh, particularly if he lived in the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Any police or military raid on that complex would undoubtedly cause 'much excitement'; something that a later generation of Indian Army officers would know only too well.[82] Furthermore, if the leaders were arrested in West Punjab, they would find themselves in a Pakistani jail, with potentially difficult and embarrassing implications for both governments. If, on the other hand, Singh was placed in a jail in East Punjab, then it would become a centre of agitation. In short, the time was not right for such action.[83] Realizing that Jenkins's points were valid and sensible, Mountbatten reluctantly agreed with his governor and informed Nehru and Jinnah.

Outside of Lahore and Amritsar, the worst communal clashes were taking place south of Delhi in Gurgaon district. Trouble started on 25 May, when groups of Hindus attacked a Muslim village. This was soon followed by Muslim (Meos) reprisals, which escalated into large scale fighting over the district, including the razing of villages and mass murder. The police did what they could; on one day even firing over 1,000 rounds.[84] The Deputy Commissioner in Gurgaon was Patrick Brendon, whose attempts to stamp out the violence soon attracted the interest (and criticism) of Indian politicians in Delhi. On 11 June, Mountbatten warned Jenkins about the increasing discontent with Brendon. The issue had been raised the previous day in the Indian Cabinet and all sides, Mountbatten admitted, 'spoke with vehemence against the incompetence, rudeness and uselessness of the District Commissioner' and felt that the time had come to transfer him. The Home Member, Vallabhbhai Patel, had been particularly incensed by Brendon's decision to arrest a number of leading Hindus in the district. This 'provocative conduct', Patel wrote, 'had completely destroyed the confidence of the majority community of the district'. It was alleged that Brendon had become depressed, gloating over the folly of the British policy of leaving India and lamenting the loss of control. Although Patel admitted that he did not know whether these allegations were accurate or not, he felt that because they had gained wide currency, they were undermining the

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authority of the Deputy Commissioner and he had to be transferred immediately.[85]

The criticisms of Brendon were (like Nehru's intemperate speech of 16 June) unjustified, unfair and highly inaccurate. Jenkins dutifully explained to Mountbatten that Brendon had to deal with 'tribal fighting spread over an area of perhaps 1,000 square miles, with resources which were the best we could give him but which are in my judgment inadequate'. Although he admitted that the situation was bad, he did not blame Brendon and had sent the Commissioner of Ambala down to Gurgaon to report on the situation. If the commissioner felt that Brendon should be transferred, he would order it, but he warned Mountbatten that 'I do not want to make transfers under political pressure'.[86] It was again unfortunate that at a time when British officials should have been solely focused on maintaining law and order, they had to deal with constant sniping and criticism and got little support from the viceroy. Brendon's memoir of his time in Gurgaon (held in the Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge) shows how stretched the authorities were in this part of the Punjab, having to deploy most of their reserve police forces either in Guragaon or to keep the road open to Delhi, leaving the rest of the police 'in small detachments . . . barely large enough to protect their own police stations. We had nothing but this small force of troops for controlling the vast upheaval in the District and this force was utterly inadequate.'[87]

Another transfer that Jenkins had to make was that of M.R. Sachdev, a Hindu member of the I.C.S. who had been appointed as one of the commissioners in the Partition Committee.[88] The Punjab Muslim League objected strongly to Sachdev because they had no confidence in him and threatened to pull out of the commission.[89] Jenkins complained to Mountbatten. He objected to the selection of officials 'without reference to their seniority, experience and professional competence'. 'During the past two years', he wrote, 'the services in the Punjab have been demoralized by the political parties and are full of party supporters and party spies.' If the Muslim League got their way, then the Hindu and Sikh parties would wish to include their own nominees in the commission, which would make things impossible. Jenkins believed that a fundamental principle was at

stake. Unless the League backed down, 'I may have to decline further responsibility for Punjab affairs, and to recommend the immediate release of civil servants who do not wish to remain in the Punjab under the new regime.' He would not be able to acquiesce in any arrangements that implied a lack of confidence in the competence and integrity of civil servants.[90]

Mountbatten wrote back to Jenkins on 12 June, telling him that because of the 'Hindu preponderance on the Committees you had set up . . . there was a danger that the facts would be twisted in such a way as to prejudice the political decisions'. Mountbatten, therefore, suggested that additional Muslim members of the civil service should be added to the committees in order to scrutinize decision-making and report to Mamdot 'if any monkey tricks were suspected'.[91] In some ways Mountbatten was right. Jenkins may have proudly upheld the neutrality of his subordinates and had no reason to suspect their impartiality or integrity, but in the fraught circumstances of June 1947 this was no longer good enough. Indeed, despite Jenkins's staunch defence of his subordinates, it was becoming increasingly clear that the integrity and competence of many officials were being subsumed in the communal anger now sweeping the province. One of the factors that contributed to the high level of violence and communal conflict in the Punjab was not necessarily always an absence of authority, but authority that acted in 'a malignly hostile manner'.[92] Paul Brass cites the example of an impartial deputy commissioner in the district of Montgomery who was replaced by an openly biased Muslim magistrate. Almost immediately the new magistrate 'declared war on the Sikh community' and thus contributed to the killing.[93]

Similar instances took place throughout the Punjab during this period as authority was transferred to successor governments that had yet to come into being. For example, in Amritsar in March, Muslim magistrates and police officers openly supported Muslim mobs and sent their non-Muslim colleagues off to investigate imaginary crimes in the suburbs and civil lines. Likewise, in Lahore, Muslim police officers assisted the Muslim League National Guards in looting shops in a non-Muslim area of the city.[94] For his part, Jenkins remained confident that these were relatively isolated

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incidents and most of the allegations in the press were 'without foundation', although he did admit that some officers 'failed to check the disturbances or took an active part in them. In the Attock district it has been necessary to arrest two pensioned *subhadars* and one serving major of the Indian army, who are believed to have been concerned in the mass murders and looting.' There were similar cases in Rawalpindi district.[95] It is likely that had the Punjab been in the hands of someone who was less zealous about administrative standards, such examples would have been far more numerous.

Conclusion

In the final few days before British rule ceased, the situation that Jenkins had long feared finally came about. The police were now unreliable and there was a near mutiny at a recruit training centre in Lahore. Rural police stations had stopped functioning and the Muslim League National Guards were openly marching through the streets of Lahore abusing non-Muslims.[96] Shahidi *jatha* groups were now estimated at over 19,000 in strength and there were increasing rumours of the smuggling of arms into the province.[97] Groups of Muslim refugees were being targeted by Sikh mobs and on 12 August, thirty Pathan (Muslim) labourers had been killed on the Grand Trunk Road.[98] The 'communal war of succession' that Jenkins had long feared was finally taking place.

Jenkins sent his final report to Mountbatten on 13 August, updating the viceroy on the situation and noting that his records of the violence that had been regularly compiled and sent to New Delhi were bound to be incomplete because of the frequency of the raids and the decline in the administration.[99] By now, the situation in the rural areas was catastrophic, with trains being derailed and massacres committed by armed gangs. Jenkins was particularly worried by 'fairly large bands' of Sikhs raiding Muslim villages and behaving with 'extreme brutality'. In the cities, the police forces were openly unreliable and unable to maintain law and order. In Lahore, the Inspector-General of Police suspected that the murder of fifteen Sikhs in a *gurdwara* had been instigated by local police forces, while those Hindus and Sikhs still in the capital were frightened and claiming

that they could no longer serve in West Punjab. Jenkins was unsure what would happen in the coming days, but feared that the Sikhs would 'assert themselves on the boundary question'. Hindus were now streaming out of Lahore and were being mirrored by long trails of Muslims moving west. Jenkins flew out of Lahore on 15 August and never returned to India.

The role of Sir Evan Jenkins during the final months of British rule in the Punjab remains neglected in histories of partition. He is, at best, a mere helpless spectator, watching from his heavily guarded compound in Lahore; at worst an incompetent administrator, unwilling to take the decisive action that was required, or biased against one or another of the main religious communities of the Punjab. Yet both generalizations are unsatisfactory and take little consideration of the context of his actions. Despite being heavily criticized for not declaring martial law, this is a simplistic and unhelpful criticism; as if with a wave of his hand Jenkins could have stopped all the violence. Jenkins did what he could to clamp down on the disorder, but could not achieve this for one simple reason: the authority that Jenkins was supposed to be restoring no longer lay in his hands: it was being transferred to a new regime. Jenkins made this point numerous times after he had retired, telling one correspondent that '*All Governments, without exception, are stable only in so far as they can effectively reward and punish*.' This was a point of crucial significance. By 1947, the British could no longer do this. 'In these conditions', he wrote, 'an unlimited force of troops and police would be helpless. People could literally get away with murder, and with the gravest offences against property, in the knowledge that if their victims were of the right community and they themselves were on the right side of the boundary on 15 August they had nothing to fear.'[100] Similarly, Patrick Brendon, the much-criticized Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon, complained that 'Nobody in his senses was going to give useful information to help maintain law and order if by doing so he might incur the displeasure of the future rulers of the country.'[101] Indeed, the privileges that the British had once bestowed upon loyal subordinates counted for nothing once the date for departure had been announced. By simply focusing on whether

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Jenkins should have imposed martial law or not misses this vital point about authority and power.

Jenkins played an important role in the endgame of empire in the Punjab and did a considerable amount of good work to ensure the transfer of power was as smooth as possible. His accurate and far-sighted reports and warnings to Wavell and Mountbatten testify to his expertise about the Punjab and the likely effects of partition. It was unfortunate he was ignored for so long. That the final months of British rule in the Punjab were marked by unprecedented violence and slaughter was not so much an indication of the failure of Jenkins's administration, but a symptom of the insurmountable problems that he faced and which would have crushed lesser men. The welter of criticism that has been showered on Jenkins and the few British officials that were still in the Punjab in 1947 has also masked the dedicated and selfless role that they played in the final days of the Raj. Jenkins's memorandum of 4 August is perhaps the best account of the difficulties under which he (and his subordinates) had to work. It concludes by stating that:

> If I have succeeded in showing that we have in the Punjab the kind of situation in which people fight—a situation as real as that in Palestine, which incidentally is about equal in area to, and considerably smaller in population, than Multan and Muzaffargarh Districts; that the critics themselves are in part responsible for this situation and have given no help to the authorities; that talk about the inefficiency of British rule ignores the fact that the object of the present exercise is to eliminate it; and that on the whole we have done our best in an intolerably difficult situation; this memorandum will have served its purpose.[102]

That Jenkins continued to run the Punjab with calm efficiency and to inspire and command the loyalty and respect of his subordinates says much about his character and ability. He remains one of the forgotten figures of the partition of India and deserving of better remembrance.

Notes

1. Sir Evan Meredith Jenkins: educated at Rugby and Balliol College, Oxford, joined the ICS on 25 Oct. 1920. Between 1920 and 1925 he served as Assistant Commissioner in a variety of districts in the Punjab (Ferozepore, Lyallpur, Rawalpindi, Amritsar, Lahore, and Simla); Deputy Commissioner, Hoshiarpur (1925–30); Deputy Commissioner, Gurdaspur (1930–1); Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar (1931–3); Deputy Secretary and then Joint Secretary of the Industries and Labour Departments of the Government of India (1933–7); Chief Commissioner of Delhi (1937–40); Secretary to the Supply Department to the Government of India (1940–4); Private Secretary to the Viceroy (1943–6); Governor of the Punjab (1946–7). His brother was Sir Owain Jenkins who wrote a memoir entitled *Merchant Prince. Memories of India, 1929–1958* (London, 1987), in which Jenkins appears a number of times. Jenkins was the model for the sensible and experienced District Officer known as 'Lightfoot', in Penderel Moon, *Strangers in India* (London, 1946). Jenkins was played by the British actor Julian Wadham in a dramatized documentary, *The Last Days of the Raj*, (Blast Films for Channel 4, 2007), which emphasized Jenkins's role in warning Mountbatten of the potential for violence if the Punjab was partitioned.
2. Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi* (London: Pan 2008,), p. 32.
3. Asian & African Studies, British Library London (AAS): MSS EUR D807, Jenkins to Mosley, 10 Oct. 1960. See also MSS EUR A221, Jenkins's comments on a copy of Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the Raj* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), 23 June 1979.
4. AAS: MSS EUR D807, Professor C.H. Philips to Jenkins, 21 January 1966 and the reply, 1 March 1966. Jenkins wrote: 'I prefer not to comment on the Transfer of Power in India, because I was a member of the Indian Civil Service and must therefore refrain from saying or writing anything that might embarrass my former political superiors, British and Indian, and also because recollections not supported by contemporary documents are of very limited value.'
5. AAS: MSS EUR D807, F.L. Chase III to Jenkins, 3 Feb. 1966, and the reply, 1 Mar. 1966.
6. 'Jenkins was one of the most able British Officers in India', Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana, The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1996), p. 152; 'a brave and intelligent man of long experience', Michael Edwardes, *The Last Years of British India* (London: Cassell 1963), p. 224; 'the very brilliant Governor of the Punjab', Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten* (London: Hamilton, 1985), p. 64.
7. Sir Evan Jenkins, Obituary, *The Times*, 5 Nov. 1985, p. 16.
8. Wavell, *Wavell. The Viceroy's Journal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 108.
9. Viceroy's Personal Report No. 17, 16 Aug. 1947, *TP*, Vol. XII, p. 763.
10. Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India*, (London: Abacus, 1997), pp. 620–1.

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11. Liaquat Ali Khan to Mountbatten, 15 Apr. 1947, *TP*, vol. X, pp. 255–8. For various criticisms of Jenkins, see *Dawn*, 4 Mar., 14 May, 18 May, 19 June ('Jenkins Must Go'), 24 June ('Jenkins Indicted'), and 27 June 1947.
12. The phrase is probably the best single description of what was happening in the Punjab at this period. It is from 'Memorandum', contained in Jenkins to Mountbatten, 4 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, p. 512.
13. *The Tribune*, 16 June 1947, cited in *TP*, vol. XI, p. 429.
15. Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service*, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1993), pp. 201–2. The judiciary and executive branches of government were separate in other parts of British India, but not so in the Punjab, where the Deputy Commissioner combined both functions.
15. Evan told him in 1929 that the Raj was coming to an end. 'It may last my time. Just. It certainly won't last yours.' Jenkins, *Merchant Prince*, p. 1.
16. For the Unionist Party, see Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, passim.
17. 1945–46 Punjab Provincial Legislature election results quoted in Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 150 n.
18. Ian Talbot, 'The 1946 Punjab Elections', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 14/ 1, (1980), pp. 65–91.
19. Jenkins formed a good working relationship with Khizr, although he was never entirely convinced that the premier was truly dedicated or capable of running the province. 'The trouble about Khizar', Jenkins wrote, 'is that he seldom carries his thinking beyond a certain point'. Jenkins to Wavell, 14 Jan. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, p. 501.
20. Jenkins to Wavell, 15 Apr. 1946, *TP*, vol. VII, pp. 272–74.
21. Jenkins to Wavell, 31 Aug. 1946, *TP*, vol. VIII, pp. 371–77.
22. The Cabinet Mission Plan was created by the British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, and was intended to formulate a way of transferring power from British to Indian hands as a Dominion within the Commonwealth. It consisted of Lord Pethick-Lawrence (Secretary of State for India), Sir Stafford Cripps (President of the Board of Trade), and A.V. Alexander (First Lord of the Admiralty). After extensive discussion the Mission declared that India would become independent. The Central Government would run defence, foreign affairs and communications, while responsibility for everything else would be split between Muslim-majority and Hindu-majority 'groups' of provinces.
23. Jenkins to Wavell, 21 May 1946, *TP*, vol. VII, p. 645.
24. Jenkins to Wavell, 3 Aug. 1946, *TP*, vol. VIII, p. 180.
25. Note by Sir E. Jenkins, 19 May 1947, *TP*, vol. X, pp. 893–94. Jenkins's notes on the meetings were sent to Brockman (PSV) by Stuart Abbott (Private Secretary to Jenkins), on 20 May. Abbott added that 'This is the usual sort of interview Gov. Punjab has with Sikh leaders!' Hartley Library, Southampton (HLS): Mountbatten Papers, MB1/D261, Abbott to Brockman, 20 May 1947.
26. Jenkins to Wavell, 27 May 1946, *TP*, vol. VII, pp. 710–13.
27. Jenkins to Wavell (telegram), 29 May 1946, *TP*, vol. VII, pp. 724–25.
28. Jenkins to Wavell, 4 Jul. 1946, *TP*, vol. VIII, pp. 5–9. These grievances (against the Unionist Ministry) included the failure to permit the use of *jhatka* meat; the lack of funds to teach Gurmukhi; a low level of representation in the services and the Ministry; discrimination against Sikhs in terms of school fees and grants; the refusal to recognize Punjabi as the official court language; and the discrimination of the predominantly Muslim police force. Jenkins believed that these grievances could be remedied easily and were not worth fighting over.

29. Larry Collins & Dominic Lapierre, *Mountbatten and Independent India 16 August 1947–18 June 1948*, (New Delhi: Vikas, 1984), p. 21.
30. There are numerous examples of this. As early as February 1947, Lahore reported that: 'The Sikhs now have little faith in the settlement's permanency and are continuing to advance their plans for the formation of the Akal Fauj or Saina.' National Archives of India, New Delhi (NAI): Home Political (Internal), 18/2/47, 'Provincial Fortnightly Reports for the Month of February 1947'. At a meeting with Lord Ismay (Mountbatten's Chief of Staff) on 14 Apr. 1947 Jenkins warned that if unionism or partition could not be achieved, there was little else to do but withdraw and 'leave both sides to fight it out'. The Sikhs would fight, 'but would rather wait until we were out of the way'. Record of Meeting between Lord Ismay and Sir. O. Caroe, Sir E. Jenkins, Sir E. Mieville, Mr Weightman, Mr Abell, and Captain Lascelles, 14 Apr. 1947, *TP*, vol. X, pp. 231–34. On 30 Apr. Jenkins telegraphed Mountbatten. 'The Sikhs are preparing for an offensive', he wrote. 'I believe that the leaders would prefer not to launch it until July 1948 or later; but they will find it difficult to control their followers'. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 Apr. 1947, *TP*, vol. X, p. 506. A fortnightly report in July stated that Sikh 'preparations for an eventual war between the Sikh and Muslim communities have not slackened'. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 18/7/47, 'Provincial Fortnightly Reports for the Month of July 1947'.
31. Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994), p. 112.
32. Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, pp. 159–60.
33. See 'The Punjab Problem', enclosed with Jenkins to Wavell, 7 Mar. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, pp. 878–84. Despite Jenkins's firm belief in Unionism, rumours swept through Congress that he had 'engineered' the campaign that led to Khizr's resignation. This was almost certainly without foundation. Sir Francis Tuker, *While Memory Serves: The Last Two Years of British Rule in India*, (London: Cassell, 1950), p. 227.
34. Jenkins to Pethick-Lawrence, 25 Feb. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, pp. 814–16.
35. Jenkins to Wavell, 3 Mar. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, pp. 829–34.
36. Mamdot to Jenkins, 5 Mar. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, pp. 866–67.
37. Jenkins to Mamdot, 5 Mar. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, pp. 867–68.
38. Jenkins to Wavell, 3 Mar. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, pp. 829–34.
39. Liaquat Ali Khan to Mountbatten, 15 Apr. 1947, *TP*, vol. X, pp. 255–8.
40. *Dawn*, 14 May 1947, cited in Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Reporting the Partition of the Punjab 1947: Press, Public and Other Opinions*, (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), p. 191.
41. HLS: MB1/D259, Baldev Singh to Wavell, 11 Mar. 1947.
42. Jenkins to Wavell, 5 Mar 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, pp. 868–70.

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43. G. D. Kholsa, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 101.
44. Throughout his career Jenkins had enjoyed good relations with many Indian colleagues, including many who had been his immediate superiors. AAS: MSS EUR D807, Jenkins to Mosley, 10 Oct. 1960.
45. See Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, (London: Hamilton, 1985); P. Zeigler, *Mountbatten. The Official Biography*, (London: Collins, 1985), Chapters 28–37.
46. 'Memorandum', contained in Jenkins to Mountbatten, 4 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, pp. 511–12.
47. The *Tribune*, 16 June 1947, contained in *TP*, vol. XI, p. 429.
48. 'Memorandum', contained in Jenkins to Mountbatten, 4 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, pp. 511–27.
49. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 16 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 429.
50. For Mountbatten's friendship with Nehru, see Zeigler, *Mountbatten. The Official Biography*, pp. 393–94.
51. Mountbatten to Jenkins, 19 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 508.
52. Mountbatten to Jenkins, 24 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 594.
53. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 24 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, pp. 605–06.
54. 'I was from time to time urged by the political parties to order the summary shooting of all persons suspected of misconduct. The troops and police had orders to shoot actual rioters, but I declined to be a party to indiscriminate massacres.' AAS: MSS EUR D807, 'General Observations', in Jenkins to A.A. Michel, 27 Nov. 1967.
55. Simeon Shoul, 'Soldiers, Riot Control and Aid to the Civil Power in India, Egypt and Palestine, 1919–39', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. 86, No. 346, (Summer 2008), p. 129.
56. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 25 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 624. Between 10 and 21 June, bomb attacks in Lahore killed thirteen people and wounded over 100.
57. AAS: MSS EUR F409, 'Typescript of the Draft for a Talk Given by George Maconachie Brander, CIE, ICS.'
58. Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge (CSAS): A.J.V. Arthur Papers (3), 'Handing Over Note of A.J.V. Arthur, Esquire, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Multan, 18/10/1946 to 5/8/1947', pp. 20–1.
59. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 25 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 625.
60. See N. Lloyd, 'Sir Michael O'Dwyer and "Imperial Terrorism" in the Punjab, 1919', *South Asia* 33, 3, (Dec. 2010), pp. 363–80.
61. HLS: MB1/D265, Jenkins to Mountbatten (telegram), 21 May 1947.
62. HLS: MB1/D265, Mountbatten to Jenkins (telegram), 24 May 1947.
63. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 13/31/47, 'The Punjab Disturbed Areas Act I of 1947'.
64. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 13/32/47, 'The Punjab Public Safety Act, 1947, and Amendment Thereon'.
65. S. Wolpert, *Shameful Flight: The Last years of the British Empire in India*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 161.
66. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 4 Feb. 1947, *TP*, vol. IX, p. 615.

67. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 18/5/47, 'Provincial Fortnightly Reports for the Month of May 1947'.
68. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 33/55/47, 'Newspapers—Action against *Dawn*'.
69. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 18/4/47, 'Provincial Fortnightly Reports for the Month of Apr. 1947'.
70. CSAS: A.J.V. Arthur Papers (3), 'Handing Over Note of A.J.V. Arthur, Esquire, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Multan, 18/10/1946 to 5/8/1947', p. 23.
71. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, pp. 775–77.
72. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 3 Jul. 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 844.
73. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 776.
74. Mamdot to Jenkins, 2 Jul. 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, pp. 822–24.
75. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 3 Jul. 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, pp. 843–45.
76. See Tan Tai Yong, 'Prelude to Partition: Sikh Responses to the Demand for Pakistan, 1940–47', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, vol. 1/ 2 (Jul.–Dec. 1994), pp. 167–96.
77. Note by Sir E. Jenkins, 23 Jul. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, pp. 309–10.
78. Record of an Interview between Sir E. Jenkins (Punjab) and Sardar Swaran Singh, 25 Jul. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, p. 354.
79. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 Jul. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, p. 427.
80. Sir G. Abell to Jenkins, 4 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, p. 539.
81. Record of Interview Between Rear-Admiral Viscount Mountbatten of Burma, Mr Jinnah, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, Sardar Patel, and Captain Savage, 5 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, pp. 537–39.
82. For the storming of the Golden Temple in June 1984, see Mark Tully & Satish Jacob, *Amritsar. Mrs Gandhi's Last Battle*, (London: Cape, 1985).
83. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 9 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, pp. 636–37.
84. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 18/5/47, 'Provincial Fortnightly Reports for the Month of May 1947'.
85. Mountbatten to Jenkins, 11 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, pp. 263–64. Patel's comments from V. Patel to Mountbatten, 9 June 1947, enclosed with above, pp. 264–65.
86. HLS: MB1/D266, Jenkins to Mountbatten, 14 June 1947. Jenkins wrote: 'As regarding Brendon's personality and manners, I always treat with considerable reserves stories about British officers "gloating" over casualties, pointing out that the disturbances are only a foretaste of what will happen later on, and the like. Nearly all these stories are inventions. The fact that they are now so readily believed is one of the reasons for the eagerness of the British officers to get away at the earliest possible date. Brendon is not inhuman, and he has worked through the disturbances with a complete disregard for his own health and comfort. On the other hand he is over-confident, does not delegate enough work, and is brusque, not only with Indians but with British superiors and colleagues.'
87. CSAS: Brendon Papers, (Small Collections Box 5, No. 1), 'Disaster in Gurgaon', p. 43. Brendon went on leave to Simla on 20 June after receiving death threats from Hindus (pp. 60, 64).
88. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 6 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 175.
89. Mamdot to Jenkins, 10 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, pp. 269–70.
90. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 11 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, p. 268.

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91. Mountbatten to Jenkins, 12 June 1947, *TP*, vol. XI, pp. 316–17.
92. 'Individual constables may be lazy, corrupt or as enflamed by communal hatred as their fellows, but they are also under the command of their superiors. The abetting or even involvement in violence resulted not from widespread insubordination, but from the local police following the lead given by their officers and civilian superiors.' Talbot, 'The 1947 Violence in the Punjab', pp. 10–12. The involvement (or at least passive acceptance) of the authorities in communal violence was also seen in the riots in Gujarat in 2002, which according to Asghar Ali Engineer was 'unprecedented in post-Independence India in the extent to which the machinery of government was both complicit and active in the violence'. See Asghar Ali Engineer, 'The Gujarat Carnage', in I. Talbot (ed.), *The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947–2002*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 140.
93. Paul R. Brass, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946–47: Means, Methods, and Purposes', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5/1, (2003), pp. 91–2.
94. Kholsa, *Stern Reckoning*, p. 101, 103. See also p. 105 (Multan) and p. 115 (Amritsar).
95. HLS: MB1/D94/21, Abbott to Abell, 12 Apr. 1947.
96. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 12 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, p. 688.
97. NAI: Home Political (Internal), 18/7/47, 'Provincial Fortnightly Reports for the Month of Jul. 1947'.
98. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 13 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, p. 700.
99. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 13 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, pp. 700–04.
100. AAS: MSS EUR D807, 'General Observations', in Jenkins to A.A. Michel, 27 Nov. 1967. Emphasis added.
101. CSAS: Brendon Papers, (Small Collections Box 5, No. 1), 'Disaster in Gurgaon', p. 51.
102. Memorandum', contained in Jenkins to Mountbatten, 4 Aug. 1947, *TP*, vol. XII, p. 527.

Part III

New History

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10

Finding a Place in the Partition Discourse: The Christians of West Punjab

Paul Griffin

Introduction

Historical writing on the independence of India and Pakistan and the partition of the subcontinent has shifted over the past two decades from concerns with the 'high politics' to the human consequences attendant on the division. The emphasis has been on 'lived experience' and on giving voice to the subaltern communities. Differences in the partition experiences of uprooting and violence arising from status and gender have been explored in a growing number of locality based case studies. This 'new history' discourse now dominates writing, yet it remains largely Punjab-centric in approach.[1] Within the Punjab context the focus is on the experiences of Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh migration across the new international boundary between East and West Punjab established by the Radcliffe Boundary Commission award. The Christian population of West Punjab is a significant minority,[2] but despite the growing interest in the 'human dimension' of partition, its experiences in 1947 are largely hidden from historical view.

Work around this community tends to cover either missionaries in colonial India or their modern day position under an Islamic state.[3] Much of the former research has been conducted from the missionary viewpoint and focused on the nature of religious conversion, the

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church's relationship with the Raj and the role of the missionary within India.[4] Most church history also focuses on the southern church, with little mention for the church in the North-West.[5] Church history is represented as starting with the establishment of the missions and ending in the 1930s, with partition often set as a footnote in the epilogue of church discourse. The aim of this chapter is to integrate the narrative of partition with that of the Christian minority and its individual situation in colonial India. Before focusing on this issue by means of utilizing fresh missionary archival material, it is necessary to briefly reflect on the development of the Punjabi Christian community.

The Development of the Punjabi Christian Community

The origin of Christianity in Punjab is a subject of contention. Some writers suggest that it can be dated back to the work of St. Thomas in the first century but the viability of this claim is difficult to comprehensively substantiate.[6] Whether or not St. Thomas did visit Punjab, the Christian community was very small before the late nineteenth century mass conversions. Their impact is seen by the fact that the recorded number of Punjabi Christians rose from 0.1 per cent of the total population in 1881 to some 1.9 per cent half a century later.[7] Within the British administration, whilst missionary activity was far from a sanctioned state policy, because of the concern, particularly after 1857, that it would destabilize society, missionary societies were given some freedom to conduct their activity throughout India. In addition to members of British based missionary groups, a number of American missions were also active, especially in the Punjab region. Converts were drawn from different elements of society, making the community quite diverse in religious and social background. While missionary activity varied between the denominational missions in Punjab, education and improved social conditions were always an important facet of missionary activity which gave a particular incentive to many of the lower castes. However, until the conversion of the lower caste Chuhras, this work received only a limited response from Indians and the impact remained steady but not extravagant.[8] The Chuhras were an oppressed

caste and had a long history of poverty and 'untouchability', from which they had wanted to escape for generations.[9] Though there was much debate within missionary communities as to which caste would be most responsive to evangelism, the most successful mass conversions involved the Chuhras. They are attributed to an unexceptional animal hide dealer from Shahabdike in Sialkot district named Ditt. On receiving Christian instruction from a friend, Ditt spread news of the missionaries and their message whilst travelling across the countryside.[10] Whilst Ditt himself was baptized by the United Presbyterian mission in Sialkot in 1873, the mass conversion movement happened at the request of Chuhras themselves, who heard about the missionaries and sought them out for baptism. As a result of the Chuhra movement, other missionary organizations were attracted to the Punjab and gave enhanced resources to the rural mission.

The mass conversions did not come without problems and anxieties for the missionaries who became concerned that the Chuhras had only taken on a superficial garb of the Christian faith.[11] Tensions arose from the different expectations of missionaries and converts. Missionaries hoped that the Chuhras' baptism and new Christian identity would lead to changes in lifestyle and outlook, whilst the village Chuhras hoped for uplift in status, better social protection, and help in representing their interests to landlords.[12] Between denominations, response to the new demands placed upon the missionaries varied but many were very responsive to the needs of those now under their care. However, they were also cautious about disturbing the social balance and had little desire for a social revolution against the standard practices. Many Chuhras were persecuted by landlords on becoming Christians but still endured because of the hopes their new identity held for them.[13] Most still lived as a landless minority within a village and their lack of connection with other Christians was seen as a severe weakness for their continuing faith and development. This problem was potentially heightened by the growth in revivalist Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim movements in the late nineteenth century. They were indigenous responses to the Christian threat and sought to reconvert Christians. Such organizations as the Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha movement

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were in fierce competition with each other as well as with the Christian missions. They utilized many of the same methods as the latter resulting in a tract warfare which raised the communal temperature in the Punjab. Although one should be careful in reading back the 1947 partition merely to the activities of such groups, they clearly paved the way for the politicization of religious identity.

Chuhras were not reconverted, but their new identity as Punjabi Christians did not raise their social status in the eyes of their neighbours. However, a number of steps were taken by the mission organizations to help some of those under their auspices into a reality of increased socio-economic security. The move to the new canal colonies established in West Punjab is perhaps the most prominent example of this endeavour. In addition to the establishment of Christian villages in the colony areas which we will examine below, some Punjabi Christian Chuhras also took advantage of the increased employment opportunities in the colony towns and grain markets. The Chenab canal colony in particular, attracted the migration of a great number of the Chuhras, resulting in a Chuhra population of 115,525 in the colonies by 1904.[14] The westward migration to the canal colonies left a high concentration of Christians in what would become Pakistan.[15]

The movement from the central Punjab districts impacted in the local mission stations. The United Presbyterians lost as many as 5000 from their congregations through migrations to the canal colonies.[16] In many cases, their response was to simply follow the converts and set up new congregations amongst them but they also pioneered a new tactic, using the development of the colonies for a more direct advantage. In 1892, the Catholic Bishop of Lahore decided to establish a village of Christians to alleviate their poverty and to become a model of Christian life within Punjab.[17] The resulting village of Mariabad was envisaged as a beacon for Catholicism in North-West India. Many other Christian villages were set up amongst the canal colonies by the different mission organizations. In all, 53 were established; a remarkable achievement given the landless nature of the majority of Christians.[18]

These projects could take in only a limited number of converts and many remained in a largely subservient position, but the establishment

of Christian canal colony villages as a whole is indicative of the importance of landowning within both the Christian community and Punjabi society. The other objective for the missionaries in the late colonial era was the growth of a home church and leadership in order to secure the long term position of the church. The motivation for a change of leadership was also present within the Punjabi church, as many of the Indian leaders wanted to take control away from the Western missionaries to create an Indianised church in control of its own destiny. This naturally varied between the denominations which had different systems of authority but each felt the pressing need to bring Indians into a 'swadeshi church' which was autonomous.[19] Whilst there was tension about exactly how this was to happen, the Indian church, across each of the denominations, took control of their own organization and governance just before the independence of the country. Crucially however, the church leadership represented the elite and had little input from the vast majority of Punjabi converts from a rural untouchable background. The Punjabi church was thus in a precarious and potentially divided situation prior to the 1947 partition.

The elite Christian leadership in the West Punjab was sympathetic to the Muslim League cause and the growing demand for Pakistan. Many Christians attended the Muslim League's historic 1940 Lahore meeting when the 'Pakistan' resolution was passed. The Punjabi Christians' enthusiasm for the Pakistan demand was rooted in the Muslim League's minority rights discourse. Some leaders however even hoped that the British would remain in India and made this point to the final viceroy.[20] More realistic was the concern about the possible impact of the Punjab's division on the Church's organization. In the event, Amritsar was to be shorn off from the Lahore Anglican Diocese. It was easier for Christian leaders to see the potential problems than to provide solutions. Two competing appeals were made to the Radcliffe Boundary Commission at its Lahore sittings. Mr Bannerji of the Nationalist Christian Association argued for a border which would favour India as he claimed that all of the Church's logistical framework was setup on an all-India level so it would be convenient if most of the Christians were situated on that side of the border.[21] This is contrasted with D.P.S.P. Singha, the

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Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, who represented the Joint Christian Board and argued that the border should satisfy Pakistan, as the Christians of Punjab were most at home within the Muslim context and would see a rise in their proportion of the population from 1.7 per cent in colonial Punjab to 2.5 per cent in West Pakistan.[22] The future role of the Punjabi Christian community in the state of Pakistan was in fact even more uncertain than these responses to the Boundary Commission indicated. This was the result of the conflicting approaches of the Muslim elite. While the Muslim League's liberal leadership saw Pakistan as a home for Indian Muslims, those closer to the *ulema* sought the creation of an Islamic state which potentially put the Christians in the position of second class citizens. There were limits even as to how far 'secularists' would seek to accommodate Punjabi Christians. When Lord Mountbatten, in a private meeting with Jinnah bizarrely suggested that a cross appear alongside the crescent on Pakistan's national flag, the Quaid-e-Azam had to politely remonstrate that it 'would be difficult to sell' and 'repugnant to the religious feelings of the Muslims.'[23]

The Punjabi Christians and the Partition of the Punjab

Christians were relatively unscathed by the massacres which accompanied the Punjab's partition. According to the National Christian Council, approximately 200 were killed.[24] In this respect, they shared a similar immunity to that of other small minorities such as the Anglo-Indians, the Parsis, and the region's former European rulers. There were many reports from missionaries that the converts emerged largely unscathed due to their perceived neutral status, with one report noting that 'Christians who wore a cross were comparatively safe.'[25] Amongst the Christian villages which came under the supervision of the missionaries, most appear to have escaped the large-scale violence, with the village of Clarkabad even described as 'a kind of Oasis' amongst the rest of Punjab.[26]

The Punjabi Christians' neutral status was used in many instances to help the refugees and even shelter them from aggressors. One dramatic story was related in a letter describing a missionary who hid 1,500 Muslims from rioting Sikhs and even tried to put out fires until

told to stop by those who had started them.[27] In Clarkabad too, villagers sheltered Hindus and Sikhs whilst many were murdered in the surrounding villages. Along with the schools and colleges run by other communities, Christian educational institutions provided food and shelter for refugees.

Missionaries were joined by overseas members of the Society of Friends and the Red Cross in providing assistance on both sides of the Punjab border although this is largely an untold story of partition.[28] The surprising ease with which Christians could cross the border was noted by Dr H.B.T. Holland, who served with a predominantly Indian team in providing emergency treatment to refugees, both in the camps and to the foot columns.[29] This was particularly important in lowering the death rates in the camps, as Dr Holland noted, '200 (deaths) a day in a camp of 80,000 was no exaggeration'.[30] One of the largest camps, at Humayun's tomb in Delhi, which was occupied by Muslims, was even administered for ten days by Raja Ram, the Christian Principal at St. Stephen's College, since 'No Hindu or Sikh could go there'.[31]

This kind of humanitarian assistance was also present in the West Punjab. Punjabi Christians from Lahore went to hospitals to visit some of those who had been injured and found that, even there, they were some of the only people who would visit both communities, even observing that nurses refused to provide treatment to members of another community.[32] Once violence had begun to subside, missionaries were also approached to provide information in the effort to recover abducted women. [33]

Although they were untouched by violence, the rural West Punjab Christian communities were affected by the demographic transformation arising from the outmigration of the Hindu and Sikh population and the influx of Muslims from East Punjab. Whilst there was hope that the landless poor Christians might be able to acquire property once the Hindu and Sikh landlords had left, in the event, most did not manage to achieve this and instead were 'faced with unemployment and starvation'.[34] This resulted from the migration of their Sikh and Hindu landlords who had acted as patrons. The Christian tenants and menials did not receive a share of the crops as these had not been distributed before the *zamindars* left for India.

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The plight of the Christians was worsened with the large scale influx of Muslim refugees from East Punjab. The refugees settled on the evacuee land, without initially possessing permanent rights. This did not stop them from dispensing however with both Christian tenants and agricultural labourers.[35]

According to missionary reports, the resulting unemployment even occurred when Christians had been working in Muslim villages, leaving many feeling as if they had no option but to migrate in search of work to prevent inevitable starvation.[36] In all, approximately 250,000 Christians lost their source of livelihood across the whole of the West Punjab.[37] Whilst some efforts were made to prevent this, the main concern of the government was the maintenance of peace so many officials at the lower levels did not help Christians and were far from impartial in their allocation of land.[38] Even following an appeal by the Bishop of Lahore, requesting that Christian agriculturalists be given four-acre plots, preference was given to East Punjab migrants when the government began to regularize the status of evacuee land.[39]

The 'new history' of partition has begun to uncover the long term dislocation which faced refugees not only in Punjab but elsewhere in the north of the subcontinent. The works by Butalia, Talbot and Singh, Ansari, Kaur, Chattha, and others have been silent however with respect to the Christian community.[40] This reflects its minority status and the fact that Christians were not involved in the large scale massacres and ensuing movements across the new international boundaries. In reality however, no community was unaffected by the massive dislocation. With respect to the West Punjab Christians, partition resulted in migration, although this was of a rural to urban character within the region, with limited movement to the Indian Punjab.[41] Though most stayed in Pakistan, Christians were forced to migrate in search of work in the cities and on arrival take up the only route of employment open to them as urban sweepers. This transition was also hastened by a lower agricultural output in Punjab and consequent rise in the price of bread.[42] Urban sweepers took on a vastly different role from rural sweepers, who were partly involved in agricultural work. In the cities, sweeping was seen as a thoroughly unclean occupation and had a social stigma which caused communities who undertook this type of work to be ostracized from

society by the Muslim majority.[43] Even within Muslim society, which officially does not endorse notions of caste, the position of the sweeper was very much associated with an untouchable or *Musalli* status.[44] The only occupation socially more undesirable than this was the role of a wet sweeper who was responsible for the latrines and became commonly known as a *kenchpot*, meaning the 'remover of the pot'.[45] Christian migrants widely took up both forms of sweeping. Whilst socially this work was entirely undesirable, there was already a Christian sweeping community in existence which naturally attracted city migrants towards this occupation, drawn also by their desperation and lack of other skills. Poor Punjabi Christians lacked the skills and capital to fill the economic niches left by the outgoing Hindu and Sikh populations. East Punjab Muslim migrants took advantage of these new opportunities. For the Punjabi Christians newly arrived in the towns of Pakistan, the openings they took up marked a retrogressive step. Until the present day, many sweepers see their occupation as temporary, hoping ultimately to get away from their situation and perhaps buy land or achieve a more respectable career.[46] This largely unfulfilled hope is indicative of the long-lasting effects of partition for Christians who were unable to return to their former lives in the villages.

Even less has been written about the denominational impact of the internal migration of the West Punjab Christians. In fact, their movement to the cities triggered a growth in Catholicism as the dislocation of migration left many in a new area without their previous church connections.[47] The Catholic organizations in the cities were generally well organized and had established parishes and congregations, whereas Protestants largely did not. This allowed Catholics to absorb many of the incoming sweepers into their congregations.[48] Punjabi Christians did not consider the divide of denomination as clearly as the missionaries, so that moving from a rural Protestant CMS mission to an urban Catholic parish was not for them as great a step as it appears. The Catholic parishes were further helped by the Church's programme of land acquisition and the non-British origin of many priests who were largely Italian, Flemish, Dutch and Irish.[49] This distanced them from the hangover of the outgoing Raj.

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The distribution and denominational allegiances of West Punjabi Christians were thus significantly affected by their responses to the partition-related dislocation. This fact has not always been fully acknowledged. Pakistani Christians are significantly more urbanized than the rest of the population, with Catholic adherents now predominating.[50] Despite migration to cities such as Karachi, Punjab remains the heart of the Pakistani Christian community.

Whilst there was widespread suffering amongst West Punjab Christians during the troubled partition period, there was also an optimistic attitude shared by many concerning the future. Many missionaries felt that a future in Pakistan could lead to an increase in converts to Christianity. The potential conversion of the USSR, Afghanistan, and Tibet from a strong base in Pakistan was even cited as a possibility.[51] While a Central Asia conversion did not occur, localized evangelism towards other untouchables and outcaste groups does appear to have attracted a certain degree of success. For example, one report cites 10,000 enquiries from low caste Sikhs and Hindus to missions shortly after partition.[52] Some Western missionaries also saw opportunities arising from the fact that with the British departure from the subcontinent, Christianity would not be perceived as 'the hand-maiden of imperialism' and associated with the government.[53] In the early post-independence period it is striking that missionaries were more optimistic about the prospects for their work in Pakistan then in India. This was to change as successive Pakistan regimes turned to extremism using Islam to bolster the process of nation building. The gradual move away from the foundational pluralist vision of the Pakistan state espoused by Mohammad Ali Jinnah was however made as early as 1949 with the passage of the Objectives Resolution.

Conclusion

The Christian community has not yet been adequately integrated into the partition discourse. Whilst missionary activity has been widely studied, independence is only included as an epilogue in the history. Similarly, none of the reading within the partition literature has covered this community with any more than a passing reference. This

chapter has suggested ways in which this deficiency may be filled by showing both the support that studying Punjabi Christianity lends to modern scholarship and the ways in which it stretches current understandings. Partition history has many voices and experiences and is therefore consistently growing to integrate new ideas and evidence. Through this growth, the historian can move away from official accounts of a master narrative and begin to grasp the enormity of partition as experienced by the different communities and peoples across India and Pakistan. Therefore, adding the Christian minority's experience to this discourse enhances our understanding and suggests new lines of enquiry for study.

Much recent writing has emphasized the differential experiences of partition-related migration, refugee settlement and resettlement.[54] This work on the West Punjabi Christian minority hints at a similar pattern in which wealth and status determined the extent of an individual's vulnerability to the dislocation. The Christian proprietors in the canal colony villages along with the tiny Christian urban professional class were much less affected by the demographic transformations in 1947 than were the landless labourers, small scale tenants, and menials. These groups were dependent on the patronage of Sikh and Hindu landowners and were forced in many instances to migrate to the towns and cities as their labour was disposed of by Muslim agriculturalist refugees from East Punjab. In this sense we can no more speak of an un-differentiated Christian experience of partition than we can of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh experiences.

The experience of West Punjab Christians adds to the understanding already produced by Joya Chatterji with respect to West Bengal Muslims that concern with migration should not merely focus on international population movements, but should also focus on internal displacement arising from partition.[55] The rural to urban migration of West Punjabi Christians is the mirror image of the Bengali Muslim situation. But in both cases, partition disrupted long established demographic and employment patterns. Common to both experiences was the fact that internal displacement both created and signified the marginality of these communities in the post-partition environment. Much more work is required on the West Punjabi Christian experience, but it is clear that both its internal dynamics

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as well as the relationship with the majority community underwent profound socio-economic transformation as a result of partition. This context is not fully acknowledged by studies of the contemporary community which focus on legislative changes such as the introduction of the Blasphemy Ordinance during the Zia era when considering the difficulties encountered by the Pakistan Christian minority.

Notes

1. For a discussion on this, see I. Talbot and G. Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
2. 'Population by Religion', in 1998 Census of Pakistan, Population Census Organization, http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/other_tables/pop_by_religion.pdf accessed on 8 Mar. 2010. Christians, according to the 1998 census, form 1.59 per cent of the population, making them the second largest religious minority. Pakistan has the 70th largest Catholic population and 47th largest Protestant population in the world.
3. See for example the material in I.H. Malik, *Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (Minority Rights Group International, 2002).
4. See C. Harding, *Religious Transformation in South Asia: The Meanings of Conversion in Colonial Punjab* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
5. A notable exception is J.C.B. Webster, *A Social History of Christianity: North-West India Since 1800* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).
6. B. Vadakkekara, *Origin of Christianity in India: A Historiographical Critique* (Delhi: Media House, 2007), pp. 23–32.
7. G. Krishan, 'The Demography of the Punjab (1849–1947)', *Journal of Punjab Studies* 11, 1 (Spring 2004), pp. 77–89.
8. The term 'Chuhra' remains controversial and is often employed as an insult in contemporary Pakistan. The colonial sources tend to use the term in a way which homogenizes the experiences of Untouchable communities when in reality these had their own hierarchies and differentiation. For a full discussion on the various terms for Punjabi Christians who are converts from Untouchable castes, see J. O'Brien, *The Construction of a Pakistani Christian Identity*, (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 2006), pp. xx-xxxii.
9. Ibid., pp. 556–66.
10. Webster, *A Social History of Christianity*, pp. 169–70.
11. See J. Webster, 'Dalits and Christianity in Colonial Punjab', in *Christians, Cultural Interactions and India's Religious Traditions*, J.M. Brown and R.E. Frykenberg (eds.) (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), pp. 92–118; W. McClintlock, 'A Sociological Profile of the Christian Minority in Pakistan', *Missiology* 20 (1992), pp. 343–53.
12. Harding, *Religious Transformation in South Asia*, pp. 159–65.
13. Ibid., pp. 161–5.

14. O'Brien, *The Construction of a Pakistani Christian Identity, (Research Society of Pakistan, 2006)*, pp. 431–4.
15. Krishan, 'The Demography of the Punjab', pp. 80–1.
16. F. Stock and M. Stock, *People Movements in the Punjab: With Special reference to the United Presbyterian Church* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974), pp. 104–8.
17. O'Brien, *The Construction of a Pakistani Christian Identity, (Research Society of Pakistan, 2006)*, pp. 451–3.
18. Ibid., pp. 454–60.
19. Webster, *A Social History of Christianity* pp. 256–9.
20. MB1/D70/32 Typescript copy of a Record of the Viceroy of India's Interview Number 82, 21 Apr. 1947, Mountbatten Papers, University of Southampton (UoS).
21. M.M. Sadullah, *The Partition of the Punjab 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents*, vol. II, (Lahore: National Documentation Centre, 1983), pp. 191–202.
22. Ibid., pp. 220–35.
23. MB1/D29/4 Typescript copy of Viceroy's Conference Paper No. 132, 17 Jul. 1947, Mountbatten Papers, UoS.
24. Figure cited in Webster, *A Social History of Christianity*, pp. 275–88.
25. Church Missionary Society Annual Reports 1947–8 Panjab, p. 224, CMS Archives University of Birmingham (UoB).
26. Ibid., p. 120.
27. Annual Letters (Punjab) Miss Salmon, Aug. 1948 CMS/AC353 01, CMS Archives, UoB.
28. For glimpses of this, see Richard Symonds, *In the Margins of Independence: a Relief Worker in India and Pakistan (1942–1949)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
29. CMS/M/Ylg/1, 15 Jan. 1948, CMS Archives, UoB.
30. Ibid.
31. Webster, *A Social History of Christianity*, pp. 275–88.
32. Rev. J.H. Hewitt, 'Redeeming the Community', *CMS Outlook* 2 (Feb. 1948).
33. Mission Papers for North India (Punjab), G2 14g19, 23 Jan. 1948, CMS Archives UoB.
34. CMS/M/Y/lg/1 15 Jan. 1948, CMS Archives UoB.
35. O'Brien, *Pakistani Christian Identity*, pp. 584–9.
36. Annual Reports 1947–48 Panjab, pp. 221–9. CMS Archives UoB.
37. Webster, *A Social History of Christianity*, pp. 275–88.
38. Annual Reports 1947–48 Panjab, p. 225. CMS Archives UoB.
39. Mission papers for North India (Punjab), G214g/19 Apr. 1953, CMS Archives UoB.
40. See Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (London: Hurst, 2000); I. Talbot and G. Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); S. Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh 1947–62* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005); Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007); Ilyas Chattha, 'Partition and Its Aftermath: Violence, Migration and the Role of Refugees in the Socio-Economic

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Development of Gujranwala and Sialkot Cities, 1947–1961', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 2009).

41. According to the National Christian Council about 50,000 Christians migrated.
42. Mission papers for North India (Punjab), G2/14g/19 Apr. 1953. CMS Archives, UoB.
43. P. Streefland, *The Sweepers of the Slaughterhouse: Conflict and Survival in a Karachi Neighbourhood* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1979) pp. 9–12.
44. Ibid.
45. O'Brien, *Pakistani Christian Identity* pp. 584–9.
46. Streefland, *Sweepers of the Slaughterhouse*, pp. 12–18.
47. Annual Reports, 1947–8 Panjab, p. 123. CMS Archives, UoB.
48. O'Brien, *Pakistani Christian Identity*, pp. 592–607.
49. Ibid.
50. See W. McClintlock, 'A Sociological Profile of the Christian Minority in Pakistan', *Missiology* 20 (1992) pp. 345–6.
51. Rev C.S. Milford, 'Towards Christian Unity in the New India', *CMS Outlook* 86 (Aug. 1947).
52. 'From Near and Far', *CMS Outlook* 5 (May 1948), p. 2.
53. Annual Reports 1947–8, Panjab, p. 117. CMS Archives, UoB.
54. For details, see Talbot and Singh, *The Partition of India*.
55. See Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 181 & ff.

11

Partition Ethnographies: Food and Memories Across Borders

Ritu Bhagat

That food and identity are closely linked is attested by the often quoted nineteenth century French gastronome, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 'tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are.' Food is considered fundamental to the creation and maintenance of group identities, and 'because it is consumed, food has a potency and significance exceeding other cultural symbols.' A meal eaten in a community not only reflects the group's identity 'but is also ingested and assimilated into the body and mind of each eater' thereby consolidating social bonds.[1] Food however connects the 'what' to 'where' as well—it has become a way of locating us, physically and geographically, in the context of home and community, region and nation. Food may thus be viewed as a vector for exploring cultural spaces and complex issues of belonging. We are 'consuming geographies' because a cuisine is as much about taste as it is about a 'sense of place'; 'to eat the familiar food is to be at home, at least in the heart—as well as the stomach.'[2] This chapter seeks to examine how food has kept alive collective social memory to serve as a cultural signpost in the Indian subcontinent's history.

This study is a fragment of the larger work exploring social memory in my project titled, 'Landscape and Memory: Refugee Rehabilitation in post-partition Delhi'[3]. The work intends to explore

This chapter is part of a larger Research Project titled 'Landscape and Memory: Refugee Rehabilitation in post-Partition Delhi', being pursued under the aegis of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Fellowship from June 2009.

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'the mental and material landscapes' in which collective memory is located in the aftermath of the 1947 partition of the subcontinent. Memory is not just individual but has a social nature. Just as memories are crucial to the construction of individual identity, they play a significant role in the development of a shared experience and a collective identity, contributing to the construction of shared social memories, which are subsequently transmitted to the next generation through the process of socialization, and further leads to the enculturation of individuals in a given society. Food was one such site which constituted an important component of the partition migrant's memory. This work seeks to study food as an agency of collective recall and its expression in social everyday situations. The text focuses on remembrances attached to food and place as a means for providing meaningful space for mediation, and for creating possibilities of reflection in the cultural relations of the two neighbouring countries, India and Pakistan.

A brief introduction to the impressive body of work on food as a subject of academic inquiry in the various disciplines of Humanities and Social Sciences is followed by an attempt to trace the journey of those uprooted during the partition of the subcontinent and the migrants' attempts at rehabilitation in the capital city of Delhi through the medium of food, 'for . . . a familiar meal in an unfamiliar setting helps fight off the panics of disorientation.'[4] The deprivation and sense of loss following partition was retrieved by the migrant's engagement with food, because [in] 'exile what remains as a reference to the culture of origin concerns food' with food becoming 'a veritable discourse of the past and a nostalgic narrative about the country, the region, the city or the village where one was born.'[5] For this essay I have chosen the public arena of restaurants which bear the name of places that migrants' left behind in Pakistan, and serve what has since become famous as the typical cuisine of the Punjab.[6] The ethnographies of partition migrants in the last section clearly demonstrate their engagement with the space afforded to them by Independence as they experienced it, and the world lost and understood by the people who live it in their everyday lives.

I

Food studies have become 'a hot new field' of research[7] and a mainstream topic of study in various disciplines across the social sciences. Food signals more than just health and nutritional consciousness, it reflects other behavioural situations such as activity, work, sports, effort, leisure, celebration and gender equations in the society.[8] Food studies have thus become a multilayered and multi-dimensional subject with 'culturally constructed meanings.'[9]

Food therefore signifies. It constitutes much more than a necessary ingredient for human survival, 'food links body and soul, self and other, the personal and the political, the material and the symbolic.'[10] Hence, food becomes a system of communication, it conveys a meaning to everybody, and because we all eat and most are familiar with cooking techniques (i.e. preparation and cooking), whether it is basic or culinary exotic; food engages all and therefore can be ' . . . abstracted as symbols' which can 'condense in themselves a wealth of ideological meanings.'[11] Food not only marks aspects of our cultural identity, it acts as a crucial mediator of social relationships. What we eat and with whom convey meanings which are relevant to social identification. Food thus becomes a system of communication. 'For what is food; it is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behaviour.'[12]

Food can thus serve as a window to cultural memory. Cultural beliefs and values, attitudes and practices are expressed through the medium of foodways. Food consumption has proved to be a decisive way in which individual identities are articulated. These then find their way into local, regional and national identities. The idea of 'distinctive local and regional products is embedded in some regional and national cultures.' Thus, particular foods, drinks, and even entire cuisines have become attached to places.[13] Like elsewhere, within India too, every state and region boasts of distinctive cuisine, each with its own flavour and cultural characteristics.[14] Over time these patterns of food get transmitted across and between cultures and can serve as a form of cultural memory, at times leading to assimilation and at others, cultural clashes.

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Food is thus as much about identity creation as Memory. Food is linked to the concept of memory at the personal as well as the collective level. It may be ritual feasting or through mundane everyday practices, 'meals [help in] recalling other meals.'[15] One of the best known works on food's symbolic power in remembrance must remain Marcel Proust's voluminous novel, *Remembrance of Things Past*.[16] It constructs a powerful relationship between food and memory and its power of recall, to provide a 'definitive testimony to food's evocative [and] transporting power.'[17] '[A] bit of our past, a bit of memory, can surge in front of us when, for example, we smell a certain kind of smell that might have been around in our childhood, or we taste a long-unfamiliar food that we had once known. And these little stray moments can suddenly bring back to us a period of our lives that we thought was lost forever.'[18] Food is thus a 'highly condensed social fact' with the capacity to mobilize strong emotions.'[19] Food-centered nostalgia is a recurring theme in Diaspora studies.[20] However, very few works engage directly with food and memory. While Holtzman explores methodological concerns in the study of food and memory, David Sutton and Carole Counihan are notable exceptions in this genre. Sutton engages with thematic concerns ranging from 'ritual and exchange . . . to the 'senses' and 'nostalgia' to 'globalization' through the lens of food in his study of the kalymnos, Greece. While Carole Counihan gives an account of reminiscences of twenty-three members of a Tuscan family to record cultural change through the medium of food.[21]

II

1947 partition of India, independence from British rule as a dominion, and creation of Pakistan. Tandoori chicken invented in Delhi.

(Colleen Taylor Sen)

A cataclysmic division of the subcontinent led to the emergence of two independent nation states, India and Pakistan, in August 1947. The euphoria of independence was however short lived and was followed by a fierce and sanguinary transfer of population which uprooted and displaced millions on both sides of the border.[22] Delhi,

the new capital city of India was inundated with Hindu refugees from West Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Balochistan—Muslim majority regions which had now become a part of the new state of Pakistan. That there was apprehension in the popular mind is evident from the fear expressed by Hindus and Sikhs who confessed to Gandhi that they 'were afraid of the approach of August 15', the designated date for the transfer of power from British rule.[23] Some 100,000 people had already arrived in Delhi for reasons of safety. As Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, admitted in his broadcast to the nation on 19 August, 'nearly the whole of India celebrated the coming of independence but not so the unhappy land of five rivers. In Punjab, both in the East and West, there was disaster and sorrow. There was mass murder and arson and looting in many places and streams of refugees poured out from one place to another.' The number would swell phenomenally in the coming weeks in the wake of the communal orgy that overtook the subcontinent. West Punjab refugees brought their own tales of horror and suffering as they poured into Delhi, which resulted in retaliatory violence against its Muslim population.[24]

By the beginning of September, Delhi saw several cases of sporadic rioting and curfew was imposed albeit with little effect. Against the 4.95 *lakh* non-Muslims that entered Delhi, some 3.29 *lakh* Muslims moved out on account of partition. Delhi thus gained a population of 1.66 *lakh* non-Muslims.[25] Delhi was thus faced by an unprecedented crisis—its demography changed overnight and altered its physical landscape forever. The demographic profile recorded in 1951, as opposed to 1941 figures when the Hindu and Muslim population was reasonably balanced at 53.2 per cent and 40.5 per cent respectively, showed an increase in Hindu population up to 82 per cent as compared to Muslims, now a mere 6.6 per cent. The impact of this phenomenal increase in population is reflected in the increasing density figures. Old Delhi[26] became even more congested, its population increased by nearly 163 per cent whereas its total area increased by only 15.8 per cent thereby entailing an increase from 91 to 207 persons per acre. This apparently shot up to a thousand persons in parts of Shahjahanabad. Delhi recorded a spatial increase

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from 67.3 square miles in 1941 to 77.5 square miles in 1951 with a record population growth of 106.6 per cent.[27]

Once the refugees found their way to the capital they took shelter wherever they found empty space—in camps set up by the government,[28] schools, colleges, streets, railway platforms and the many historical monuments dotting the city. Humayun's Tomb, was now a 'squalid and congested slum created by partition.' Almost 'overnight hundreds of refugee families built their shacks of rusted tin and worm eaten planks under every alcove of the city . . . [transforming it] into a bustling slum.'[29] Old Delhi surrounding the Lal Qila (Red Fort) was traditionally the most populous and important commercial centre. And the refugees gravitated towards these areas, Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazar, Bara Hindu Rao, Darya Ganj, Sabzi Mandi to name a few. Many refugees took possession of the vacant houses of Muslims who had left for Pakistan.[30] Delhi lanes wore a deserted look, 'corpses lay uncollected . . . and little gangs of running killers played hide and seek with the police in the maze of alleys [of Darya Ganj].'[31]

There was a Punjabi population in Delhi before independence, comprising the bureaucracy, traders, unskilled labour for the building of New Delhi, contractors and builders who had made their fortune here—the most famous being Sobha Singh (*adhi nai dilli da malik* or owner of half of New Delhi).[32] The post-partition scenario, however, made for an extraordinary situation. Now the Punjabis (erroneously clubbed under the generic term Punjabi, but including people from regions such as Multan, Dera Ismail Khan, and Dera Gazi Khan, the Frontier province, Sindh, Pothwar, all speaking distinct languages and following diverse customs) were everywhere, their numbers an overwhelming presence in the landscape of Delhi.[33]

Within a year, however, the refugee camps showed a decline in population and 'Delhi had turned into a peaceful capital with tremendous zeal.'[34] By mid 1948, some 1500 stalls had been allotted to the refugees in parts of Old Delhi. Besides imparting vocational skills such as knitting, spinning, weaving, carpentry, biscuit making etc., looking after the educational needs of the displaced population through camp schools and evening colleges, the government gave top priority to housing and accommodation—several new 'asbestos

roofed' *nagars* or colonies such as Lajpat, Rajendra and Patel Nagar came up to spatially change the character of Delhi. However, despite considerable government effort at building a new infrastructure in the shape of new housing colonies and shops and providing educational and financial assistance, there just wasn't enough to tide over the magnitude of the catastrophe. The displaced migrants own effort at reviving their lost fortunes was therefore instrumental in not only their self development but also unleashed new forces of urbanization, alongside rapid commercial and industrial expansion. The Punjabi migrants provided Delhi with a zest for life, at times bordering on recklessness that can only come from those who have lost all. Amidst a life of filth and squalour, loss and despair, the displaced partition refugees sought comfort in bonding together by sharing their meagre resources and made a valiant attempt to rebuild their lives. The displacement and economic hardship led many to earn a living from the Punjabi passion for good food, and introduced the Punjabi preferences in food and cooking techniques—*tandoori* (clay-oven) cuisine[35] and the 'pleasures of eating out.' To survive they created their own means of livelihood from that very basic necessity for life and survival—food.

Indians never really had a tradition of eating out or a restaurant culture, although this was a feature for Europeans in the colonial era. The notions of purity and pollution, caste rules and religious restrictions prohibited most people from eating in public places. Hindus generally ate meals cooked only by Brahmins, the 'Maharaj' or within their own communities. That is why the cooks usually prepared the meals where they could be seen and determined.[36] The 'Hindu would not touch any food prepared outside the home. But the Muslims were in the habit of buying cooked food' writes Nirad Chaudhuri of life in Delhi.[37]

The upheavals following partition in 1947, and the unprecedented number of uprooted families however changed the outlook. The massive influx of population and the exigencies of circumstances demanded that the refugees disregard these social practices. The Punjabis were eager to work and relatively free of inhibitions. It was not surprising therefore to see that many displaced Punjabis became entrepreneurs and operators in the restaurant business.[38] Despite the

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physical and emotional upheaval, the tenacity and indomitable spirit displayed by the migrants saw them struggle and reconstruct their lives through the early decades of independence and gain a position of eventual strength.[39]

Delhi was soon to be immersed in a 'Punjabi'[40] flavour that overtook the local[41] and became the predominant taste of the city—from the roadside *'dhaba'* (eatery) to the eventual high dining experience of five-star hotels. For the displaced migrants this was not just[42] an attempt at establishing oneself in a migrant based culture, contrarily it demonstrated a visible engagement with the taste and texture of a cuisine most familiar to them and embodied particular ways of belonging—of self and community—to a shared rhythm of life, now lost to them.

The country was introduced to the epicurean delights of Punjab 'not in its pristine form, but [in a] slightly distorted form as a result of the traumatic dislocation.'[43] Punjabi food habits that have prevailed in Delhi since partition reflect the migrant's ability to transform their simple but robust food into a gastronomical extravaganza. *Chole* (chick peas) are a popular dish cooked in all Punjabi homes, particularly on family gatherings and festive occasions.[44] The *Pindi* (short for Rawalpindi) *chana* with dry *masala*, slow cooked in an iron pot to impart a blackish colour, are served with its traditional bread—leavened and deep fried—*bhature*, or even as a stand-alone item for high tea. My mother usually makes them in *'lohe di kadai'* (iron wok) but time constraints have led many to use tea bags as an instant fix for the dark brown colour of the dish. The dish became a source of survival for a family of partition refugees and gave them a sense of self which has been proudly proclaimed by their successive generations. Butter chicken is another illustration of Punjabi ingenuity—pieces of leftover chicken were used up with a sauce made of tomato and cream and a new dish was born. Similarly *Maah di Dal* (from sanskritized *maash* or lentils), has been transformed to *Dal Makhani* with Bhukhara, a restaurant in the Taj, a five-star hotel claiming copyright on its version; the *rajma-chawal* (kidney beans in gravy and rice); *kadi-chawal* (fried onion *pakoras* in a gravy of yoghurt and *besan* or gram flour); and the most defining Punjabi dish—*sarron da saag* and *makke di roti* (green mustard-leaf curry

eaten with corn bread in the winters) have moved out of household kitchens to roadside *dhabas* to neighbourhood joints to fine dining restaurants. There continues to be a proliferation of small *chole-bhature*, samosa and pakora shops in the streets and almost all the neighbourhoods, but particularly more so in Punjabi dominated localities. Moreover, Punjabi preference for *kukkad* (chicken) transformed the Delhi food arena forever—tandoori chicken and butter chicken ruling the roost quite literally. Food practices thus reveal a far more complex interplay of relationships and notions of identity. Food everywhere is not just about eating, and eating is never simply a biological process.[45] Eating patterns of any group assert its collective identity and facilitate the process of socialization i.e. transmission of culture from generation to generation—'there is no history of cuisine that is also not a history of prevailing appetite, habits and taste.'[46]

Thus, Punjabi cuisine has become an all embracing term for the food served in the northern subcontinent but actually incorporates diverse influences from Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran (Persia) imbibed over centuries. The undivided Punjab incorporated the distinct regional tastes of the Frontier region, Rawalpindi or the Pothohar plateau, Lahore and Amritsar and Sargodha regions. It was this diversity brought to Delhi from the Frontier regions in the shape of tandoori cuisine that took the country by storm.[47] The rugged terrain and rustic lifestyle of the region meant that lamb and other game were lightly spiced and roasted in ovens or *tandoors*. Now serving 'Indian' has become synonymous with Punjabi food in most restaurants worldwide (be it tandoori chicken and kebabs or tandoori breads or the vegetarian *chana masala* and *paneer*) and also within the country. The increasing confidence and economic strengthening of the Punjabi community in the years after partition contributed to an assertion of taste and preference typically Punjabi, resulting in the proliferation of mid-level restaurants and five-star hotels serving Punjabi cuisine in Delhi. The restaurants that evolved within this social and cultural milieu contributed towards the building of a social space in which the uprooted communities sought each other out. Even today a sense of fulfillment is evoked by eating out in these restaurants.[48]

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Over time non-Punjabis have also acquired the taste for *tandoori roti* and *parantha*, (a stuffed version with a generous helping of ghee or clarified butter) as opposed to home-made *phulka*, and they are commonly served in hotels and parties. *Tandoori roti* continues to be an integral part of Punjabi households even today; there continue to exist roadside *dhabas*, serving food not just to the local taxi stand drivers who almost invariably at one time were Punjabis, but also the neighbourhoods, where people continue to take their own dough to the *dhabas* and get *rotis* baked in the clay-oven for a nominal amount. As a child, I remember a community *tandoor* in Ghaziabad (a suburb on the outskirts of Delhi) where my parents lived in a rented accommodation in a locality known simply as the 'refugee quarters' (the houses had been built for those displaced by the partition and many owners had taken tenants to supplement their income). Every evening, women from each house would bring a little of their *balan* (charcoal or firewood) to be put in the *tandoor* to make their own *rotis*. In the sweltering summers, this was considered particularly easy as one could make four-five *chapattis* at one go, thus saving time and fuel cost. *Sanjha Chulha* or community tandoors incorporated a community sharing integral to Punjab, lost today in urban areas, however, it continues to survive as a romanticized notion with restaurants of similar name serving Punjabi cuisine in Delhi and elsewhere.[49]

When we moved to Delhi in 1976 and my father was allotted accommodation within the university campus, my mother went to great lengths to get her own *tandoor*, which was finally purchased from Bhogal[50] market and brought to our home and placed in the *veda* (courtyard). It was a Sunday ritual to prepare *tandoori rotis* or *paranthas* when relatives dropped by. The *tandoor* was finally disposed off in 1992 when my father retired from service and we had to move into a small flat where there was no open space for it. Coincidently, we found a community *tandoor* in the new locality just across the road, in the refugee camps, this time built by the Delhi government for those displaced within the nation, during the militancy days in Punjab.

III

'Taste it. Swallow. Close your eyes. Roll your tongue around in your mouth. You're *there*.'

(Mark Winegardner)

In this section I propose to examine how restaurants have been used to memorialize public space, revealing the ways in which political and historical processes have been negotiated in this gastronomic and sensory space. According to Sutton and Beriss (2007) restaurants 'form a bustling microcosm of social and symbolic processes focused on the formation and maintenance of identities in the context of highly sensory environments.' Restaurants constitute an ideal social space, reflecting the 'ethos of cities, regions and ethnic groups and nations' and as in this case study, memories of a lost homeland. That restaurants are more than just eating places is also evident from Bell and Valentine's work. According to them 'restaurants provide consumption experiences that are as much about identity—of places and people—as they are about the serving of food and consuming food.'[51]

According to Edward Casey, 'places carry powerful memories for those who have shared a common past and at the same time places often represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing them in the present.' Places thus 'furnish convenient points of attachment for memories . . . and serve to situate what we remember'[52] [and this] intimate relation between memory and place is realized, through the lived body'. Body memory is characterized by Casey as that which is intrinsic to the body, to its own way of remembering: how we remember in and by and through the body. The lived body is thus indispensable to remembering places, in tracing out the arena for the remembered scenes that inhere so steadfastly in particular places. The restaurants, as we shall see in the ensuing discussion, open up 'new spaces of remembrance and expression' as social and symbolic spaces, as well as their relationship to larger historical processes. These restaurants have become sites where processes of identity and memory are 'emplaced'.[53]

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That 'people invest places with social and cultural meaning'[54] is reflected through the medium of food and cuisines served with place-names attached to them. The use of place-names in almost all the dishes served exhibits a strong desire to not just replicate the dishes that might have been typical of the region but to evoke nostalgia for their roots, a lost homeland and a wish to sustain and transmit the memory of that taste to future generations. Food and places thus combine together to reveal a powerful 'intrinsic memorability.'[55]

The restaurants serving cuisines attached to places celebrate more than the significance of a collective recall of food memories. The relationship between memory and place, realized through the agency of food and the 'lived body' helped the displaced population to overcome their splintered identity and rupture brought about by partition. The restaurants serving ethnic cuisines in Delhi thus perform more than a gustatory function; they provide a counter space to an ordinary person's desire for well-being, kinship and friendly relations. They also exhibit a desire to find elements of commonality, of living together—across borders.

Before 1947, there were few hotels, and the ones that existed were expensive and not accessible to most Indians—in the British Civil Lines, there was the Cecil (with its hundred rooms and lush green lawns), the Swiss and Maidens with its 'grand façade', the Imperial Hotel on Queensway (democratic India's Janpath, or 'people's path') in Connaught Place, New Delhi.[56] The restaurants and shops selling imported foodstuff and goods were mostly catering to the '*sahib log*', the British and Americans, and the suitably anglicized Indians.[57] All this changed with the coming of partition refugees. They set up their *dhabas* and joined hands to take over business in Connaught Place. V.N. Datta cites Piccadilly and Davicos as two examples that passed into Punjabi hands and were subsequently known as Standard and Metro. The Lamba family of Rai Sahib Parmanand, hailing from Pind Dadan Khan in Jhelum district, left a flourishing business and their home in Model Town, Lahore in the wake of partition disturbances, fleeing for safety with just 'one attaché case'. Arriving in Simla, they sold off some of their property to restart business in Delhi. Thus, their Volga restaurant in Lahore was reborn in Delhi. Looking back, Kailash Lamba, his younger son, is grateful that the family escaped

safely and without any loss of life. The Lamba's and Ghai's had earlier started their business selling ice-cream in the early 1940s. The business partnerships grew into family bonds formed with marriages and the kinship spread the business not just in Delhi, but all over India and even internationally.[58]

In the capital city of Delhi, the restaurants, particularly those started soon after partition, have created a community for diners, symbolic of the past and which epitomizes nostalgia and attempts to reconstruct emotional resonance. The restaurants examined in this chapter have been studied at two levels—mid segment restaurants started by refugees soon after partition; and those located in five-star hotel complexes today, which by virtue of their location offer a dining experience catering to the elite, the nouveau riche middle and business class and the foreign guests staying at the hotel. The Moti Mahal, Embassy, Peshawari, Khyber, Lahori, and Pindi were among the many restaurants started with humble beginnings by partition refugees, which attained tremendous popularity and acceptance.

Tandoori chicken, butter chicken, Afghani chicken, kebabs, naans, lachcha paranthas available in their many variant add-ons—garlic *naans* and *pudina* (mint) parathas; the ubiquitous *dal makhani* and the *chole-bhature* or simply the *Pindi chana*, being served almost everywhere—from *dhabas* to high dining hotels and restaurants—are now identified as staple Punjabi food, recognizable all over Delhi and the rest of the world with Punjabi cuisine. Moti Mahal (and Peshawari too) acquired a firm reputation for the butter chicken dish which survives till today and defines the taste of Delhi; while Bannu kebabs and sikandari raan were a Khyber speciality.[59]

The five-star hotels have tried to replicate this ethnic nostalgia with restaurants such as the Frontier at the Ashok Hotel;[60] Paatra, located at the Hotel Jaypee Siddarth claims to 'dish out signature dishes from undivided Punjab';[61] the Lalit group of hotels and resorts offers cuisines of the bygone era of Balochistan in its restaurant, Balochi. The restaurant serves 'the cuisine of undivided India [in this] abode of diners who are close to their land'.[62] The Oberoi hotel chain houses a Kandahar restaurant to cater to the Punjabi migrant taste.[63] The Line Of No Control at the Qutab Hotel in south Delhi, named so in an obvious attempt to defy the dividing border between India and

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Pakistan, advertised its food as presenting the choicest selection of authentic Indo-Pakistani cuisine, long forgotten recipes from a time when the region was a unified culinary force.[64] The restaurant closed down in 2007, but still has a loyal clientele begging for its reopening, and provides an interesting example of how popular sentiments have been expressed through the medium of food.

These restaurants have thus become sites for the production of cuisines which are not just local but emblematic of 'distant geographies' claiming inheritance from undivided India. These cuisines create their own fashion and class acceptance. And in between the local and mundane; distant and exotic, an effort is made by these restaurants to seize the lost heritage through the recreation of a culinary taste reminiscent of places which now exist on the other side of the border and are out of bounds as a result of the partition of the subcontinent and constant political differences between the two states. The cuisine may or may not be a true replica of the land and taste it professes to represent, but the culinary discourse it portends, upholds a collectivity and a shared memory—albeit a lost collectivity. At another level, this discourse performs a pervasive function, that of transmission of memory. People unfamiliar with the 'distant geographies'—born and brought up in post-independent India, but who have inherited the taste and art of cooking representative of those regions, receive this memory of taste and history through these sites. Restaurants thus become sites in which the past is not only reinvented in terms of food and taste but also develops as an alternative space where the divisions and strife created by history are dissolved for the familiar, unitary enjoyment of the culinary taste and epicurean delights. The food here serves as a sensory form of memory; a cultural meaning conveyed through the platter serving as entrée to individual and collective engagement with the past.

IV

The Moti Mahal restaurant was established soon after partition and acquired a cult status in Delhi's gastronomical history. Kundan Lal Gujral, the man behind the restaurant and the popularization of

Punjabi cuisine is a prime example of how 'chefs became heroes of [the migrant's] recovery.'[65] Gujral is credited with introducing *tandoori* cuisine to Delhi—particularly *tandoori* chicken and other meat preparations and the breads (*rotis* and *naans*). Kundan Lal Gujral, orphaned at an early age, worked in Sardar Mukha Singh's restaurant in Peshawar to fulfill his family obligations. He came to Delhi along with other fleeing refugees once it became clear that Independence had come with its concomitant transfer of population between the two nations. The need to make a living in the alien land led him to start a *dhaba* with the help of two other partners, Kundan Lal Jaggi and Thakur Das Maggo. They occupied an open space in Darya Ganj, where most refugees had congregated, to build their *tandoor* and started the *dhaba* for a living. They were soon joined by many others who had earlier worked together in Peshawar; the *masalchi's* and cooks recreated the magic of the famed tandoori cuisine of Peshawar in Delhi and thus began the journey of Moti Mahal.

Old timers recall how Nehru and visiting foreign dignitaries would make a halt in front of the Moti Mahal restaurant, en route to the Lal Qila (Red Fort), to be greeted by Kundan Lal with a garland of *choti lachi* (*elaichi* or small cardamom) and a band playing in the background. The Moti Mahal is said to have played host to the American President Nixon, Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau, Soviet leaders Alexei Kosygin, Bulganin, and Khrushchev. The *tandoori* chicken is also said to have played an important part in the Simla Agreement. The legacy of political connections is prominently displayed in all their franchise outlets even today. The restaurant at Darya Ganj is no longer with the family but Kundan Lal's grandsons carry on the legacy with their many franchises.[66]

* * *

The Peshawari,[67] located in Darya Ganj, was started by Sardar Sujan Singh. Hailing from the village of Thoa Khalsa[68] in Rawalpindi, he was a well-to do businessman living in Kalan Gujar Singh in Lahore with substantial business interests including a Burma Shell petrol pump and residential property, (they received compensation worth

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Rs 46000 against the property left behind in Pakistan). The family was on a visit to Delhi to meet an aunt and also to witness the birth of the new nation on 15 August 1947. The events which unfolded thereafter made him realize that going back home to Lahore would be out of the question, and they would have to make a new life in the new state. His son, Gurbachan Singh recalls that his father however did go back to Lahore to bring the Guru Granth Sahib which they had left behind in their house. Their house had been taken over by Muslim occupants who were reluctant to allow him in, but finally gave him permission to take away the holy book. It took Sujan Singh two days and tremendous hardship to cross the border and reach Amritsar.

Having thus lost all their assets, Sujan Singh had to start from scratch. He managed to open a small tea stall next to the Sabzi Mandi in Darya Ganj to earn a living. Subsequently, an acquaintance from his village, similarly destitute and looking for work, persuaded Sujan Singh to occupy a small space in the nearby stable to build a *tandoor* and open a *dhaba* to serve meals. Thus, began the journey of Peshawari. Initially, the food served comprised simple fare of *dal, sabzi, roti* and a meat preparation. Slowly the place gained credence and acquired a reputation for good food. Gurbachan Singh recalls how his father would personally select all the ingredients—whether it was fresh vegetables, meat or *masalas*—and this became the USP of Peshawari, good food at reasonable prices, particularly in the face of stiff competition from the Moti Mahal restaurant next door. Gurbachan Singh recalls a sense of keen competition between the two neighbouring restaurants, although he remembers the founders of Moti Mahal with affection. Since most of the displaced people from West Punjab and Frontier converged in and near the Darya Ganj area, living a hand to mouth subsistence, the food offered by this eatery fulfilled not just a physical need but an emotional void as well. The restaurant became a site for displaced refugees to seek support and new and lasting bonds were formed which survive even today.

Gurbachan Singh, on graduating with a B.Com degree from Delhi University, decided to pursue his own interests besides assisting his father with the restaurant. In 1966, he took independent contracts with the MES (Military Engineering Service) and continues to run

his business from the shop in Darya Ganj, allotted to his father by Burma Shell in lieu of their petrol pump in Lahore. Gurbachan Singh is at present the president of the Darya Ganj Association of Traders. The family also opened a new Peshawari take-away in Noida in 2005, which is managed by his son, Kawal Preet Singh.

* * *

The Khyber,[69] in Kashmere Gate, one of the oldest restaurants in Delhi, was started by Peshawari Lal Sethi, the only son of Kishan Chand Sethi, chief agent in the Afghan government, with a very handsome income. Peshawari Lal received very little formal education, with an indulgent father to provide him a life of luxury as is the wont with a male child in Indian society. Destiny chose otherwise, Peshawari Lal lost his father when he was barely 12 years old with just a years schooling to his credit. Brought up by his uncle he did odd jobs, working in canteens and a bakery. In 1927, he decided to open his own National restaurant and bar on Sadar road in Peshawar, which grew into a successful business. Once partition became imminent he sold off his business and sent his family to Delhi with some cash and gold for safe-keeping. According to his son, Tosh Sethi, Peshawari Lal was also involved with Hindu organizational activities and was under police surveillance before partition. He therefore managed to escape with much difficulty in disguise and reached Delhi much later. After some initial attempts to set up business, which failed miserably because of unreliable associates, Peshawari Lal bought 220 *bighas* of agricultural land in Mubarakabad on the outskirts of Delhi. The land was however acquired by the government in 1957 for residential purposes for refugees from West Punjab and became the Model Town of today. He then decided, with much persuasion from his wife, to open a restaurant, the Khyber at Kashmere gate in remembrance of the land they had left behind. Khyber soon acquired a reputation for good food; their *sikanderi raan* or full leg *burra, kadai* meat and butter chicken, continues to enjoy a formidable reputation today. The restaurant, with its teakwood staircase and imported J&GM crockery, succumbed to the vagaries of time and finally closed in 2007. Khyber opened for a short spell in

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Rajouri Garden in 2005, but after an unsuccessful attempt at tapping the new markets in West Delhi with a prominent Punjabi clientele, the Sethis now offer outdoor catering for select clients.

* * *

Pindi[70] restaurant situated in the NDMC market at Pandara road, close to India Gate was founded by Kasturi Lal Wadhwa, the eldest of a family of nine children who migrated from Rawalpindi. Like most other migrant restauranteurs, he had not worked in this industry before partition, but in a transport company along with his father. Partition forced them to flee their home, taking the route from Jammu to Ambala, and thence to Delhi. His son, Yashpal recalls how the family gathered whatever they could in 16 metal containers, *peepe*, commonly used for storing items in the kitchen in Punjab. Kasturi Lal stayed and worked in Delhi with his maternal aunt and her husband who had shifted to Delhi a year before 'because they had better foresight' and managed to set up business dealing with scrap from army junk.

According to Yashpal, the family was now living behind Naaz cinema in houses vacated by the Muslims, when his father decided to strike out on his own. And so he set up a hand drawn cart, *redi*, at the India Gate lawns, selling *Pindi chana* which Kasturi Lal's father prepared. Slowly, from passers-by and other refugees the clientele began to include government employees from nearby offices and army mess. Following his example a few others opened tea stalls next to his *redi*.[71] The business gained in reputation and volume, so much so that Kasturi Lal's hands would swell up by evening and would require the healing touch of his mother's bandage of home-made turmeric and mustard oil paste every night.

In 1959, New Delhi Municipal Corporation offered them shops at Pandara Road, and Kasturi Lal progressed to a small *dhaba* style restaurant. The new location, however, meant a new start as it took time for business to take off requiring much hard work. But fortune smiled on them when some government employees visited his shop and once again word of mouth publicity led to his clientele coming back to him repeatedly. It was to fulfill the demands of his customers

from the army that non-vegetarian food began to be served; meat and chicken began to appear on the menu; although in the initial years an order of chicken meant that Kasturi Lal would ride his triumph motorcycle to Jama Masjid, buy the chicken and then prepare the dish to be served.

In 1975, his son Yashpal joined the business and gave it its present status. His grandsons have now acquired professional degrees in hotel management to further the business. The restaurant provided for the entire clan; 'fourteen marriages took place from this restaurant's income' is Yashpal's testimony. It was his father's sixty years of hard work which has paid off for the family. Kasturi Lal was able to take pleasure in the hard won prosperity before his death on 25 January 2010.

* * *

Lahori[72] restaurant, in Noida, began its journey in Sarojini Nagar market in 1955. Labh Chand Miglani belonged to *zila* Montgomery, *tahsil* Renala Khurd, district Okara[73] and were *'halwai's,'* owners of sweet shops. The riots in 1947 and the deteriorating situation forced the family of four sons and three sisters to flee their homes overnight, penniless. Two of his sons, Mulkraj and Devraj were separated from the family and were only eventually reunited six months later in the Delhi refugee camps. The family was rehabilitated in the Bela road barracks constructed for refugees from West Punjab. Labh Chand started selling *lassi* (a drink made of sweetened curd, very nourishing in summers and popular amongst the Punjabis and non-Punjabis alike today) opposite the old Delhi railway station in a *khokha* (a shack made of wooden planks and at one point quite common all over Delhi) They decided to sell by the name of 'Lahori *lassi*' because 'Lahore' was more identifiable. Served in large tumblers made of brass, popularly known as 3 *pao* glasses, for 25 *paise* the shop became popular and they started selling sweets as well. According to Omprakash, his son, the family was offered space near Bengali market of today, but Labh Chand chose the location of Sarojini Nagar market for their business and finally opened their Lahori restaurant in 1955. The family moved to Noida, close to Delhi in 2003. The restaurant

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has changed its outlook now to a take-away outlet and outdoor catering due to locational and business constraints.

* * *

The Embassy,[74] located in Connaught Place, was started by Prem Nath Malhotra hailing from the '*vakilon ka mohalla*' in the Jhelum district. His story is typical of that of many Punjabi refugees in terms of the enterprise and self-reliance displayed. He differed from other Punjabi restauranteurs however in that he possessed some prior experience in the business before partition. His father, Mangal Sen, a contractor was engaged at the Karachi airport site along with Bhai Mohan Singh. His sudden death forced Prem Nath, studying in FC College Lahore, to move to Karachi to complete the project. His heart was however not in the construction business, so along with a friend, Gopal Krishna Ghai, they decided to open a restaurant, 'Kwality'.[75] It had a ready made clientele of Western servicemen who were based in wartime Karachi.

The partition however changed everything. Prem Nath's wife and family were helped by their Muslim neighbours to escape by train to Amritsar, while he himself came much later. They all collected at Amritsar, stayed for a while and then came to Delhi to his brother's house, a government servant, in GoI market. Friends and acquaintances pooled their meager resources of cash and gold jewellery to re-open a business. 'The women folk saved us. It was their possessions of gold jewelry that helped tide over the cash crunch' declares his son Sunil.[76] In 1948, according to Sunil Malhotra, Madame Jane's beauty parlor was taken over to establish the Embassy restaurant in Connaught Place. When asked to take the whole block, his father chose not to—for he expected 'to go back' one day and 'till many years he thought of going back'. This hope of return appears to have been commonplace as refugees on both sides of the border have expressed it during the retelling of their experiences.

The Embassy restaurant became a refuge for many partition migrants. Some who worked for the Malhotras in Karachi at the construction site as well as the chefs in their restaurant found their way to it. A spirit of camaraderie and an effort to look out for each

other governed their attitudes recalls Sunil Malhotra. An errand boy who worked for his father at the Karachi airport joined them here and his grandchildren continue to be employed in the restaurant even today. In 1974, the second generation took over when Sunil joined his father's business and he continues to run the family partnership established by his father and G.K. Ghai. A new branch of the Embassy restaurant was inaugurated in the Civil Lines in 2007, because the open space and colonial style old buildings with their high ceilings could recreate a similar ambience and an old world charm. He hopes that their children, now professionally trained in the business, would continue the legacy.

* * *

Conclusion

For the refugees in Delhi, food communicated a collective self; it became the discourse with which they could mediate their presence in the new and unfamiliar land. Their food and style of cooking helped them to stay connected to their past and also to unite the old and the new ways of life. Many refugees came together in these *dhabas*, not just for work and survival, but also for restoration of their identities, to resurrect a way of life that was fast deserting them. Meals become an expression and affirmation of culture and a celebration of group ties rather than just an opportunity for sustenance. The restaurant Moti Mahal was not just a home to the Pishoris but also became a place where they could showcase their culinary talents. Jagatiri Lal, popularly known as Gatti, created his own version of *pullao* with leftover rice, boiled eggs, *gurda-kaleji*—it figured for long on the menu as *Gatti Pullao*, recalls his son Ravinder Kumar.[77] Their food thus became an expression of cultural identity and enhanced their community ties not just amongst themselves but also vis-à-vis other communities in Delhi.

These *dhabas*—which ultimately grew to acquire iconic status and enabled a whole Punjabi cuisine to flourish and spread not just within the nation's restaurant culture but world-wide—in essence constituted for the partition refugees a discourse with which they

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negotiated their presence in the new land. It enabled them to remain connected to their past, while also constituting a language with which to negotiate their presence in the host country. The restaurants and eating places established in the aftermath of partition in Delhi created alternative spaces where a shared past not only survived, but struck roots and transformed itself to forge new associations for the future. To begin life anew in a land whose geography and culture was unfamiliar to many was not easy. The sense of loss was phenomenal, as Sunil Malhotra summed up, the 'work of generations was lost' with partition. While existing studies have pointed to this sense of loss, they have not highlighted the way in which food culture helped refugees to both materially and emotionally adapt to the profound dislocation of partition. This study not only fills in this important gap, but adds to the existing literature on the 'self-reliance' of Punjabi refugees. It was of course not unique to the refugee experience in Delhi but was displayed in towns and cities across North India and Pakistan.

Delhi's spatial development, along with the emergence of a post-partition Punjabi generation has changed the circumstances of the refugee restaurateurs. The Sethis of Khyber recall 1986 as the year in which decline set in, while Sunil Malhotra concurs that most eateries saw a steady decline since the eighties and it has been 'difficult to survive'. Some failed to survive the test of time. Over time, growth patterns changed the face of Delhi many times; the traditional centres of business and residence are no longer what they were in the early decades of independence, causing a serious hardship to the restaurants.[78] Most have either taken to franchise or catering or moved location to survive. But they have left a lasting legacy of the essence of Punjabi cuisine to the city of Delhi.

The linkage between food and identity amongst partition migrants is a subject which would repay further academic study. The *mohajir* experience in Karachi and those of the *bhadralok* refugees from East Bengal who settled in Calcutta provide two significant case studies. It is hoped that this work on Delhi migrants will encourage future empirical and comparative examinations of this previously neglected field of enquiry. Finally, and most intriguingly, there may be scope for 'food diplomacy' in the attempt to find an alternative space from

the embittered past of Indo-Pakistan relations.[79] Food, which through dietary and ritual considerations kept communities apart in colonial India, might in future affirm regional commonalities which cross the territorial dividing lines that were drawn in 1947.

Notes

1. Mimi Martin, *'Food', Encyclopedia of Community* (SAGE Publications, 2003) http://www.sage-ereference.com/community/Article_n190.html.>accessed 10 Apr. 2010.
2. Eugene Newton Anderson, *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 130.
3. Some early works on post-partition refugees include V.N. Datta's comprehensive article, 'Punjabi Refugees and the Urban Development of Greater Delhi', in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 442–63; and Dipankar Gupta's, 'The Indian Diaspora of 1947: The Political and Ethnic Consequences of the Partition with Special Reference to Delhi', in K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *Communalism in India: History, Politics and Culture* (New Delhi: Longman, 1991), pp. 80–108; and the recent notable study by Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).
4. David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 19.
5. Joelle Bahloul, 'Nourritures juives', *Les Temps modernes*, no 394 bis, titled 'Le second Israel' (1979), 387, cited in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Nora, *Practice of Everyday Life*, vol 2 (University of Minnesota,1998), p. 184.
6. The Punjab here refers to undivided Punjab which may have been politically divided in 1947 but remains a culinary unified region, with traditions that evolved over centuries. The narrative is interspersed with some personal experiences because of my own inheritance from across the border. My father hails from *tahsil* Alipur, Multan Division, now in Pakistan; my mother's family belonged to Gujranwala, although they were living in Lahore at the time of partition. *Pishori halva* was a mandatory part of all birthdays and family get-togethers while my grandmother was alive.
7. Whether food studies are a matter of serious academic pursuit or mere 'scholarship-lite' is a matter of contention. See David Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (New York: Berg, 2001).
8. Food discourse has become an important section within anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, history, literature, medicine, nutrition and business. For different perspectives and further readings, see David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (London: Routledge 1997); Counihan Carole and Penny van Esterik, 2nd edition, *Food and Culture: A reader* (London: Routledge, 2008); James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell, *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating* (Oxford: Blackwell 2005); A feminist approach in Carole Counihan's work, *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender Meaning and*

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Power (London: Routledge, 1999); Bob Ashley et al., *Food and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004).

9. Jon D. Holtzman, 'Food and Memory', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35 (2006) pp. 361–78.
10. Counihan, and Penny Van Esterick, op. cit., p. 2.
11. M.J. Weismantel, *Food, Gender and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), cited in Carole Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body* (London: Routledge, 1999).
12. Roland Barthes, *Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*, in. Robert Forster and Orest Ranun, translated by Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum, *Food and Drink in History: Annales E S C*, vol. 5 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979).
13. Bell and Valentine, op. cit., p. 17.
14. See Alan Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd edn., Edited by Tom Jaine (Oxford University Press, 2006); Madhur Jaffrey, 1986, *A Taste of India* (London: Pavilion Books Limited, 1986); Julie Sahni, *Classic Indian Cooking* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1988); K.T. Achaya, 1994, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).
15. See David Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: an Anthropology of Food and Memory*, (UK: Berg, 2001).
16. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, (New York: Random House, 1934), 2 vols.
17. Mark Winegardner, *We Are What We Ate: 24 Memories of Food* (London: Harcourt Brace, 1998).
18. Proust, p. 36.
19. Arjun Appadurai, 'Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia', *American Ethnologist* 8 (3 Aug. 1981), pp. 494–511.
20. See P. Roy, 'Reading Communities and Culinary Communities: The Gastropoetics of South Indian Diaspora' *Positions* 10/2 (2002), 471–502; and P. Mankekar, ' "India shopping": Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configuration of Belonging'. *Ethnos* 67/1 (2006), 75–98 cited in Holtzman (2006); Krishnendu Ray, *The Migrant's Table: Meals and Memories in Bengali-American Households*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).
21. David Sutton, op. cit., Carole Counihan, 2004. *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family and Gender in the Twentieth Century Florence* (London: Routledge, 2004); Jon D. Holtzman, op. cit.
22. Termed as the greatest mass migration of history, it was estimated that 15 million people crossed the borders on both sides and many more perished in the riots. The exact figure of those who died may never be known. See *Millions on the Move: the Aftermath of Partition India*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (1948); A compilation of David Page, Anita Inder Singh, Penderal Moon and G.D. Khosla, *The Partition Omnibus* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002); Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh ed., *Region and Partition: Bengal Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent* (Karachi: Oxford University Press,1999); D.A. Low and Howard Brasted, *Freedom, Trauma, Continuities: Northern India and Independence* (New Delhi: Sage, 1998); Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudasia, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2000) The difficulties on the other side of the border were equally daunting. See Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007; Sarah Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947–1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

23. Prayer Meeting, Wah Refugee Camp, 5 Aug. 1947, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (*CWMG*), vol. 96, p. 192.
24. Mahatma Gandhi tried to assuage their feelings by claiming that his ' . . . pain was no less than that of any Punjabi'. He made regular appeals for peace and an end to 'revenge and retaliation' but was many a times at the receiving end of refugee wrath in his prayer meetings and on visits to the refugee camps at Diwan Hall, Wavell Canteen and the Kingsway Camp. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 96, 356–67ff.
25. V.K.R.V. Rao and P.B. Desai, *Greater Delhi: A Study in Urbanization 1947–1957* (Bombay, 1965), p. 56.
26. Delhi, the ancient and historic city, witness to many successive rulers and dynasties, reached its zenith under the mighty Mughals as Shahjahanabad with its palace complex, Lal Qila (Red Fort), bazaars, many gardens and mosques (the largest being the Jama Masjid). The city grew within the walls of this citadel with several Gates as entry points. It survives in popular parlance today as the city of yore, *Purani Dilli* (Old Delhi). While New Delhi, popularly known as Lutyens Delhi after its architect, was a site chosen south of Shahjahanabad, atop the Raisina hill built over a period of sixteen years by the British in the early twentieth century, as their Imperial capital with its Viceregal Lodge, (the present Rashtrapati Bhavan or Presidential House), the two secretariats, the Council Chamber (Parliament house), the Memorial Arch (India Gate) and the colonnaded shopping centre, Connaught Place. See G. Risley Hearn, *The Seven Cities of Delhi: A Description and History* (Calcutta, 1928, first published in London, 1906); Narayani Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803–1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981); Maheshwar Dayal, *Rediscovering Delhi: The story of Shahjahanabad* (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1982); H.K. Kaul ed. *Historic Delhi: An Anthology* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985).
27. Census of India, 1971.
28. The Government of India constituted a separate Ministry of Rehabilitation to look after the needs of the displaced population. Refugee camps were set up, Kingsway being the largest with 30,000 inmates, the other two in Tibbia College area in Karol Bagh and another in Shahdara.
29. D.N. Chaudhuri, *Delhi: Light, Shades, Shadows* (Delhi: Niyogi Offset Books, 2005), p. 112.
30. Many took illegal possession of these houses simply because there was no other shelter. Officially only 2593 of the total 102,000 houses were allotted to refugees by the Government of India in 1948. *Annual Report of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, 1947–48*. According to an estimate, Hindu and Sikh property worth $8 billion dollars was left behind in the state of Pakistan.

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31. W.H. Morris-Jones, 'Changing Delhi Through Changing Eyes', in Frykenberg, op. cit., 431–41.
32. Khushwant Singh, 'My Father the Builder', in Maya Dayal (ed.), *Celebrating Delhi* (Delhi: Penguin and Ravi Dayal, 2010), pp. 1–14.
33. D.N. Chaudhuri records how he saw 'young Sikh men selling fruits and cheap trinkets', all along the *kauria pul*, footbridge alongside old Delhi railway station and the refugee families who had arrived from West Punjab and 'spoke in a strange dialect', op cit., p. 104.
34. Chaudhuri, op. cit., p. 113.
35. Tandoori cooking is very popular in the northern region of the subcontinent. Originally the *tandoors* were of huge sizes to serve large families but are now available in smaller sizes and also in gas and electric versions. The 'deliciously roasted flavour' however comes only when the food is cooked over live coals, acknowledges Ravinder Sachdev, *The Tandoori and Barbecue Cookbook* (Hind Pocket Books,1993); see also Ranjit Rai, *Tandoor: the Great Indian Barbeque* (New Delhi: Viking, 1995).
36. D.N. Chudhuri writes of his attendant who would only eat 'freshly fried puris and bhajji . . . prepared right in front of him . . . by the Brahmin Panditji. . . .', op. cit., p. 20; Jaffrey too records these taboos during her childhood in Delhi. Madhur Jaffrey, op. cit., p. 12.
37. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Thy Hand Great Anarch! India 1921–1952* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987), p. 719.
38. Alan Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd edition edited by Tom Jaine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 399–400; Camellia Punjabi, *50 Great Curries of India* (Delhi: Rupa & Co, 1995); Madhur Jaffrey, (1985), p. 12.
39. Writing more than four decades later William Dalrymple records his surprise at just 'how many of the people [he] met every day were partition refugees' and their impressive achievements, 'even the most well-established Delhi figures—newspaper editors, successful businessmen, powerful politicians had tales to tell of childhoods broken in two, of long journeys on foot over the Punjab plains, of houses left behind, of sisters kidnapped or raped . . .' William Dalrymple, *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*, (New Delhi: Indus: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) p. 41.
40. An all-embracing term for culture and cuisine from these areas, although the differences of language and customs, particularly of those from Multan, Sindh, and Peshawar to name a few areas, are tremendous and non-negotiable even for Punjabis.
41. The cuisine of Delhi evolved over centuries and reached its acme under the Mughals resulting in the perfection of a cuisine known for *naans* and *shirmals*; Persian-style pilafs or *pullao* and *biryani*; *kebabs* and *qorma* (made rich with the use of ghee, almonds, pistachios, yoghurt, and cream) with the techniques of *dumpukht* (slow braising) and *dopiaza* (cooked with fried onions), and their use of fragrant spices and saffron to create 'silky velvet sauces'. See Julie Sahni, op. cit: 15. However the 'original dilliwalas'—the Kayasths, Khatris, Jains, and Banias contributed their own preferences—if the Bania was vegetarian, cooking sans onion and garlic, then the kayasths were influenced by Muslim recipes. *Shabdeg* (mutton, whole wheat, turnips cooked overnight), *Nihari* (traditionally beef curry eaten just after dawn), qorma, biryani, and *siripai* (head and trotters); breads such as *roomali* roti, (so fine and soft as to resemble a handkerchief), khamiri roti, *baqarkhani*, comprised the traditional Delhi fare; with vegetarian versions like *dum aloo, malai kofta*, and *shahi paneer*. Even today most Delhiites would agree that *dahi ki gujiya* (*dahi-bhalle* being the Punjabi edition), *allu ke kulle, bedvin puri*, and *chaat* continue to be the best in Old Delhi. And although there is enough nostalgia for the *'asli dilli ka khana'*(the real cuisine of Delhi) and *'dilli ka dastarkhwan'*, even the diehards cannot deny that today *dal makhani* and butter chicken have consolidated their presence as the 'delicacies' of Delhi. See Priti Narain, 'Dilli ka Asli Khana' in Maya Dayal, op. cit., pp. 162–176, and Sadia Dehlvi, 'Dilli ka Dastarkhwan' in Khushwant Singh ed., *City Improbable: An Anthology of Writings on Delhi* (New Delhi: Viking, 2001), pp. 160–67.
42. Jiggs Kalra and Pushpesh Pant, *Classic Cooking of Punjab* (Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2004). p. xiii. J. Inder Singh Kalra, a formidable name in Indian gastronomical circles owns the restaurant Punjab Grill and serves cuisine from 'undivided India'.
43. Ibid.
44. In London for a research fellowship, we were pleasantly surprised to find *chole-bhature* and *pakore* being served for Diwali dinner by a local acquaintance who had graciously invited us to relieve our longing for home.
45. Watson James L. and Melissa L. Caldwell ed., *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).
46. Jean-Francis Revel, *Culture and Cuisine: A journey through the history of food*. Translated from the French by Helen R. Lane (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1982), p. 7.
47. Jaffrey records the pleasures of 'eating this rare and exotic fare [as] Delhi had seen nothing like it', op. cit., 34. Ravinder Kumar of Lalit hotel reiterates that for the kayasths of old Delhi tandoori food was a 'treat'. 'Seasoning' the tandoor and temperature plays an important part in tandoori cuisine—the fire is lit and temperature allowed to rise gradually. A fact emphasized by Sunil Malhotra of Embassy restaurant, 'the tandoors were always dug deep within the earth to preserve the heat, but with changing times and smaller kitchens the cooks are not willing to sit on the floor, hence the difference in taste as well.' For tandoori kebabs basting acquires special significance, the right amount of butter or oil seals in the juices and makes kebabs succulent. Also see Jiggs Kalra, op. cit., 14.
48. Almost all the restaurants profess to serve the cuisine of *undivided* Punjab and thus evoke a sense of nostalgia for the migrant population in Delhi.
49. *Sanjha Chulha*, a restaurant in south Delhi, (and there are many more all over the country), serves the mandatory chicken tandoori, chicken afghani and the ubiquitous butter chicken to cater to the Punjabi taste.
50. Bhogal has a strong concentration of Punjabi Hindu and Sikh refugee population and is located close to Lajpat Nagar, a refugee resettlement colony in South Delhi.
51. Bell and Valentine 1997, op. cit., 143.
52. Edward Casey, 2nd edn. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 189.

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53. For the diversity in debates on the subject of food as a key symbol of culture and identity, see David Beriss and David E Sutton (eds.), *The Restaurants Book: Ethnographies of Where We Eat* (London: Berg, 2007).
54. Dolores Hayden, 1997, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*(Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997), p. 78.
55. Edward Casey, 2000:186.
56. Home to army officers and officials, New Delhi's architect Edwin Lutyens himself, personalities like Dr Theodore Gregory of the London School of Economics and the economic advisor to the Government of India, the hotels were also witness to an era of political maneuvers—'inside the cream stucco Imperial . . . zealots and schemers argued, intrigued and speculated . . .[the demise of the Empire]' *Time* Magazine, 22 Apr. 1946; while much earlier in 1934, the Raja of Salempur had hosted Muslim leaders and M.A. Jinnah at the Cecil on his return from England to rescue the Muslim League from political morass.
57. D.N. Chaudhuri, op. cit., 58ff. The Maidens and Imperial Hotel were taken over by Mohan Singh Oberoi in 1943 from the Associated Hotels. M.S. Oberoi (1896–2002) hailing from Jhelum district of Punjab, began his career as a clerk in British hotels and went on to set up his empire based on the Oberoi Chain of Hotels. The Cecil was sold in 1959 to the Patna Jesuit Society to build St. Xavier's School.
58. Interview with Kailash Lamba. The business spread all over India was subsequently divided between the Lamba's, the Ghai's, and other partners. His brother Madan Lamba took over the Volga; Purshottam Lamba, Kwality, Standard and Gaylords; Kailash Lamba has Diplomat Hotel and his own furnishing venture which he had started in 1948 with just ten people—Continental Group (STROT), and now has clients in the Hospitality, Corporate, IT, Telecom and Medical sectors.
59. See section IV. A visit to Delhi seems incomplete without the taste of butter chicken even for non-Punjabis—records Chitrita Bannerji, *Eating India: An Odyssey into the food and culture of the land of spices* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 115.
60. The Frontier restaurant offers *Pathar Kebab*, *Dal Dera Ismail Khan*, *Kebab-e-Bannu* as its specialties.
61. The restaurant offers to bridge the distance between the two nations by offering cuisine from 'Amritsar to Lahore' with *lahori tali macchli, kunna gosht, chapli kebab*, and *khameeri roti* on its menu.
62. The restaurant serves *chapli kebab* (pomegranate, coriander and black pepper corn flavoured minced mutton kebabs, cooked on a griddle—specialty of Peshawar); *murgh pashtoon* (morsels of chicken cooked with a blend of special spices in a clay pot), and *dal balochi* (overnight simmered black lentil cooked with rich cream and butter)—an in-house specialty. A similar Bangalore version of the restaurant boasts of traditional use of *degchi* and *lagan* (lava stone and *pathar* cooking of kebabs).
63. The exotic fare includes *daal gosht*, *paneer tikka mirchwala*, *jungli maas* and *bhaditraka*, all considered dishes typical of the food served in the region.
64. The menu offers 'long-forgotten fare from both India and Pakistan' including dishes as being the most wanted infiltrators—*sabuta talwar-e-murgh* (whole chicken marinated in a spicy mustard paste and lavishly presented on a *talwar* i.e. sword); *afghani kalmi* kebab (tender chicken breasts marinated with cream, garlic, cheese, hung curd and cashew paste); *bhaditraka* (a nine hundred year old recipe, cubes of boneless lamb marinated with ginger-garlic paste, lime juice, green chilli paste, chironji paste, mustard oil and garam masala); *Punjabi teekhi macchi* (boneless pieces of fish marinated with ajwain, red chilli paste and mustard oil).
65. David Beriss and David Sutton, op. cit., p. 2.
66. Interview with Vinay Gujral, nephew of Kundan Lal Gujral and his daughter Shashi Kakkar. Ashim and Monish Gujral, the grandsons, have now patented the Moti Mahal legacy through their Moti Mahal Delux and Moti Mahal the Tandoori Trail chain of outlets.
67. Interview with Gurbachan Singh, son of Sujan Singh.
68. Thoa Khalsa, a Sikh majority village, holds a special significance in partition history as a site of mass suicide. Wells filled up with women's bodies as they threw themselves in to 'save the honour' of their bodies and religion. See Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998).
69. Interview with Tosh Sethi, son of Peshawari Lal Sethi.
70. Interview with Yashpal Wadhwa, son of Kasturi Lal Wadhwa.
71. Pandara Road market inhabits restaurants and sweet shops of partition refugees and has grown over the years into a popular location serving 'Punjabi cuisine'. Ajit Singh Bajaj, who set up a tea stall alongside Kasturi Lal's *redi*, owns the Have More restaurant next to the *Pindi*.
72. Interview with Omprakash Miglani, son of Labh Chand Miglani.
73. Montgomery, so named after Sir Robert Montgomery, lieutenant-governor of Punjab, lies 180 km from Lahore. It was renamed Sahiwal in 1966. Montgomery suffered particularly heavy loss of life and property in the partition riots. See G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading up to and following the Partition of India*, new ed. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).
74. Interview with Sunil Malhotra, son of Prem Nath Malhotra.
75. The Ghai's and Malhotra's association with Lamba's dates back to this period.
76. A similar account can be found in memoirs of G.D. Khosla who commends his wife for her foresight and insistence on taking out her gold jewellry from the bank locker in Lahore to deposit it in Delhi for safekeeping. The government was to later freeze all bank and locker assets and any withdrawal would have meant an application to the Custodian of Evacuee Property of Pakistan. G.D. Khosla, *Memory's Gay Chariot: An Autobiographical Narrative* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1985), p. 158.
77. Ravinder Kumar is the Food and Beverages Manager at the Lalit Hotel. The *pullao* continues to exist with a slight variation as a Moti Mahal specialty on the menu even today.
78. Even as this Chapter was being written many restaurants started after 1947 in Connaught Place—Kake da Hotel and Volga, being the latest, have closed down.
79. India hosted Pakistani food festivals in the recent past ('*Aman ki Asha*' in 2010 by *Times of India* and Jang group and Hyatt hotel in 2008); the annual International Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan has people converging on the Pakistan pavilion. In

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2009, the Warsi food from Karachi served Sindh *dum* mutton *biryani* and Afghan *kadai* mutton which was extremely popular with the Delhiites. The Shan masalas on sale are always a major draw.

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